

Prospect of early election recedes

Gulf war could mean tax rise, Lamont hints

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

A PROLONGED war in the Gulf could raise the spectre of tax increases or cuts in public spending, Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, indicated yesterday.

With Labour having snatched back a lead in the opinion polls, any such development would strike a blow to Tory morale, intensifying the government's problems over the timing of an election.

Mr Lamont yesterday made clear that prospects for tax cuts in his first budget as a means of easing the recession were minimal.

He said: "I've always made it clear that I believe the main method of controlling the economy is through monetary policy and that fiscal policy — taxes and expenditure — must be regarded as longer term measures for the supply side of the economy. The main thrust of economic management is largely through monetary policy."

John Major, the prime minister, who was entertaining the Chancellor to lunch at Chequers yesterday, has been warning colleagues privately that the next three months will

bring further economic gloom, before things take a turn for the better. Tory talk of an early election has waned.

The party chairman, Chris Patten, has already warned Conservatives not to become obsessive about the polls and ministers are clearly expecting Labour's lead to increase before the economic indicators improve.

Mr Lamont, interviewed yesterday on BBC Radio Four's *World at One* programme, said that the supplementary estimate for costs of the Gulf confrontation so far, on top of those met out of the defence ministry's ordinary budget, was £480 million. He added: "Beyond that, the costs must be highly uncertain and it is very unclear how long a war will last."

Ministers have been warned by Whitehall experts that a war in the Gulf could last at least five to six weeks. Military commanders in the Gulf have made provision for a conflict lasting up to six months.

Pledging that the troops in the Gulf would be given whatever they needed to do the job, with costs met out of the contingency reserve, Mr Lamont admitted that the reserve had already come under pressure.

"We have had an overrun on expenditure this year, to a very large extent because of the Gulf. We have made it clear that we have got to find the resources necessary for the Gulf operation."

Then came the warning: "That might mean that at the time of the budget we may have to consider what the impact on the rest of policy is."

Mr Lamont, who has promised a tight fiscal policy, said: "Clearly a war could affect both tax revenues and public expenditure, but precisely what the effect would be would depend very much how long a war went on."

With an election looming any chancellor would be reluctant to increase taxes and there was no direct threat there to do so. But clearly Mr Lamont's room for manoeuvre is limited. With company taxation revenue falling in the recession and unemployment benefit payments rising, a costly Gulf war would at least

increase the likelihood of his failing to index allowances in line with inflation in the budget, effectively a tax increase.

Mr Lamont said yesterday that Britain, as an oil producer, could be less badly hit than some countries by a Gulf war. But the government's political difficulties in the face of economic pressures were underlined when he was asked about prospects for the poll tax review. He countered: "There are many demands on public expenditure. They all have to balance against each other. Giving to one means less for others. But tight control of spending will continue."

The Chancellor did little to ease New Year's day hangovers with the rest of his message about the economy. Unemployment has risen for eight successive months and he conceded that it would rise further in 1991.

He confirmed that there would be a fall in output of about 1 per cent this year, compared to growth rates of 3 per cent or more over the past eight years. And he made it plain that there would be no question of devaluing the pound to facilitate a cut in interest rates.

But Mr Lamont did hold out hope that predictions by Mr Major, when he was chancellor, of a fall in the inflation rate to 5.5 per cent during the last quarter of this year would prove attainable.

He claimed that after the growth record of the past few years, British companies ought to be able to accommodate the present recession.

Responding to Mr Lamont's comments, the shadow employment secretary, Tony Blair, said: "The Chancellor's message offers cold comfort to the hundreds of thousands facing unemployment in the new year, to businesses crippled by high interest rates and to home owners struggling with mortgage bills."

David Blunkett, shadow local government minister, yesterday cautioned against public sector cuts. "Children in school and elderly people in need of care should not be expected to pay the price of our involvement in the Gulf situation."



Marching orders: Paul Gascoigne being sent off by the referee, Vic Callow of Solihull, in Tottenham's game against Manchester United yesterday

Daly in call for shooting enquiry

By RAY CLANCY

THE new spiritual leader of Ireland's Roman Catholics yesterday called for an independent enquiry into the shooting of an unarmed man by troops in south Armagh.

Cardinal Cahill Daly, the Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, said he was "deeply disturbed" by the circumstances surrounding the death of Fergal Caragher, aged 20, whose funeral takes place today. He was shot by Royal Marines in the village of Cullyhanna on Sunday.

Cardinal Daly was meanwhile accused of bias and his comments described as one-sided and divisive by John Taylor, Ulster Unionist MP for Strangford, who said he had expected more sensitivity.

The cardinal, preaching at a World Day of Peace mass in Armagh, said many people were "completely unconvinced" by the account so far given by the British Army of the incident. "It is vitally important that the whole truth be established," he said yesterday.

The army said Mr Caragher, a member of Sinn Féin, was shot when he failed to stop his car at a checkpoint, injuring two soldiers. However the dead man's family and witnesses insist he was waved through the checkpoint and later shot without warning. His brother Michael, aged 25, was with him and is critically ill.

Cardinal Daly added: "There must be no question or suspicion of a security force cover-up. The over-riding aim of security policy must be to convince local people in areas where they operate that the security forces are there solely to prevent paramilitary violence and crime, to protect the law-abiding public."

Lord Belstead, Northern Ireland law and order minister, has promised a full and independent investigation by senior officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and a report submitted to the DPP.

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A year of killing, page 2
Leading article, page 11

Saddam boasts of 60 divisions near border

By JOHN HOLLAND IN BAGHDAD AND ANDREW MCEWEN, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

HOPES that Iraq might withdraw from Kuwait before January 15 faded last night when President Saddam Hussein said yesterday his army had massed 60 divisions on the border with Saudi Arabia and threatened Riyadh with reprisals if Iraq were attacked.

Addressing troops on the front he said that if King Fahd of Saudi Arabia made a mistake, "he'll bite his fingers for ever in regret". His remarks rebutted a statement by President Bush who said he had "a gut feeling" that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait.

They coincided with other moves suggesting that war was more likely than peace. Harold Walker, British ambassador to Iraq said time was running out for peace initia-

tives, while Cairo and Baghdad were involved in a bitter rhetorical clash and Iran announced that it would conduct manoeuvres along its border with Iraq.

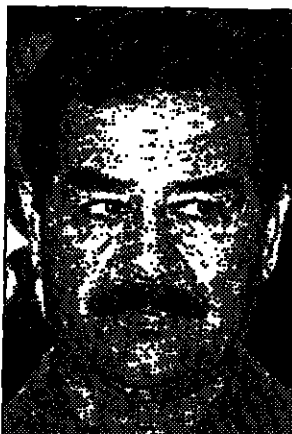
Mr Walker said the proposed visit of a senior EC official diplomat to Baghdad could be the last chance to "fill the communications void" between Iraq and the West.

President Saddam said the US had fewer than 14 divisions in the Gulf, while Iraq had completed the deployment of an additional 250,000 men since November. He did not say how many men were on the border in total, but an Iraqi division is usually 12,000 to 14,000 men.

This would put Iraq's strength on the border at between 720,000 and 840,000, substantially more than Western estimates of 510,000 men in Kuwait and a strategic reserve in southern Iraq. Iraq's total forces are about one million, backed by a militia of about 850,000.

Another report said that Iraq had formed five new divisions of the Republican Guards, totalling about 130,000 men. It has mobilised an estimated 400,000 men in four waves, including the call-up of men aged 17 announced on Monday.

President Mubarak of Egypt said in a message to President Saddam: "we are approaching a merciless inferno. Heads will turn white, cities will collapse."



Saddam Hussein: new threat to King Fahd

Nurse will choose jail rather than war duty

By RAY CLANCY

A NURSE and a doctor declared their opposition yesterday to serving with British forces in the Gulf as hundreds of medical reservists prepared to report for duty today.

One said that jail was preferable to taking part in a war that had nothing to do with Britain, and the other said that serving with the forces could leave his family impoverished.

Henry Power, a psychiatric nurse of Galashiels, Scotland, said that events in the Gulf

were no concern of his. "Cowardice does not come into it," he said. Mr Power, aged 43, who bought himself out of the RAMC 12 years ago, added: "I really would refuse to go. I would go to jail."

Andrew Rixon, aged 32, of West Hallam, Derbyshire, is a former army doctor who will go to the Gulf if he is called up. He complained, however, that it would cost him £700 a week. "When I rang the army to explain my position I was told to stop moaning," he said.

Gascoigne sent off as Spurs fall

By STAFF REPORTERS

PAUL Gascoigne, the pin-up character of British football, was sent off for dissent yesterday. The BBC television sports personality of 1990 was playing in Tottenham's first televised match of 1991 against Manchester United. He became upset when his team mate, Gary Lineker, was fouled and he rounded on the referee, Vic Callow, of Solihull. Spurs were drawing 1-1 at the time but, with a man short, were unable to prevent United winning 2-1.

Liverpool shrugged off their holiday hangover to beat Leeds United 3-0 at Anfield and maintain their almost inevitable position at the top of the first division.

In Australia, England's cricketers yet again squandered a promising position against the Australians with some inept batting in the World Series Cup and lost by 86 runs. Graham Gooch, the England captain, said: "We hit the self-destruct button."

British caution, page 9
No time for sanctions, page 10

Gascoigne report, page 19
Holiday sport, pages 19 to 23

The complete boating guide



Tomorrow *The Times* evokes every aspect of boating, from gentle voyages under sail to state of the art powerboating, in a 20-page colour supplement to mark the opening of the London international boat show. We look at technical and safety developments and suggest some ways of taking to the water

Top security for census

Computer security has been tightened for the 1991 census, on April 21. Special defences have been fitted to the purpose-built mainframe computer to prevent hackers entering the system or corrupting the information with electronic time-bombs. Page 3

On the wing

Experts are puzzled by a trend, revealed in the *Red Data Birds in Britain*, for Scandinavian birds to colonise Scotland. Climate change is a possible explanation. Page 5

Hard times

Czechoslovakia and Poland were warned yesterday that they must face up to economic hardship as they enter 1991. Page 7

Last frontiers

Colonisation of Mars and exploitation of Antarctica may be technically feasible. Can they be defended on environmental grounds? Page 12

US rate cut

Bank of America, the third largest bank in America, cut interest rates on personal and company loans to 9.5 per cent from 10 per cent. Page 30

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24,000 business failures last year

By JONATHAN PRYNN

THE deepening recession killed off a record 24,442 businesses in England and Wales last year, and the problem is likely to get worse before it improves.

The figure, which covers businesses being declared bankrupt or going into liquidation, easily beats the previous high of 21,682, recorded in 1984, according to Dun & Bradstreet, the business information company.

Last year's 34.6 per cent increase in the number of business failures compared with 1989 was also the highest annual rise on record.

The south of England was the worst affected area of the country, with the south west region chalking up the biggest increase of all, a rise of 70.2

per cent. The smallest increase was in Wales, which saw only a 17.3 per cent rise in liquidations and bankruptcies.

London and the southeast recorded a 35.2 per cent increase.

Philip Mellor, marketing manager at Dun & Bradstreet said: "It is very disturbing that the level of business failures is now nearly twice as high as it was 10 years ago."

"All the signs are that for the foreseeable future, the situation will get worse rather than improve, he added.

"The 1990s have not started well for new businesses. The more new businesses, sadly, the greater the rate of failure. Many companies are not applying basic procedures to safeguard their cashflow."

Dietrich joins plea for historic film studios

By GEOFF BROWN



Dietrich: found fame as Lola in *The Blue Angel*

SCREEN legend Marlene Dietrich has briefly emerged from years of seclusion to join a public appeal to save the huge DEFA film studios in Babelsberg, outside Berlin, where she filmed *The Blue Angel* more than 60 years ago. Speaking by phone from her Paris apartment, Miss Dietrich, aged 89, told viewers to Germany's ARD television channel that she had "only the loveliest memories" of her days at the studio, which is facing closure in the wake of German unification.

The studio complex, once the world's grandest, was originally the headquarters of UFA, the powerful production conglomerate formed in 1917 that dominated Germany's pre-war film industry. In the 1920s UFA's directors, cameramen and designers set new standards and were widely influential.

Within the studio's vast walls Fritz Lang conjured up *Metropolis*, *Siegfried* and other fantasies of Germany's past and future. F.W. Murnau created his towering version of *Faust* with Emil Jannings as the Devil; Paul Wegener directed himself in the famous tale of a clay monster, *The Golem*. Dietrich herself first worked at the studios in the mid-1920s, but it was her performance as Lola, the cabaret singer who ensnares a schoolmaster in *The Blue Angel* that made her an international star.

With Hitler's rise to power, many of the greatest UFA talents fled into exile. The studio increasingly began to be used as a vehicle for nationalist propaganda. In 1937 it was put under direct state control, turning out escapist musicals, strident calls to arms and extravaganzas such as *Munchhausen*, a plush account of Baron Munchhausen's celebrated tall

tales, defiantly filmed in the teeth of war in 1943. At the end of hostilities, UFA expired and the buildings were subsequently occupied by East Germany's fledgling DEFA film company.

Now history has taken another twist. With the sudden disappearance of East German state subsidies, the huge complex, devoted for 40 years to the production of safe, communist-approved entertainment, must now fend for itself in the private sector. The company's film directors face equal uncertainty. Political changes have removed both their economic framework and their subject matter: the glories and vagaries of the communist state.

Miss Dietrich, speaking in German, said she hoped everything could be done to save the Babelsberg studio. "Auf wiedersehen," she concluded, "I cross my fingers for you."

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By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE prime minister is expected to visit Northern Ireland this month and a determined effort is to be made by Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, to revive his initiative to break the political stalemate.

Mr. Brooke, reckoned by his cabinet colleagues to have been one of the government's quiet successes in a turbulent year, almost succumbed in setting up round table talks last summer. He said yesterday that they foundered on the question of the correct timing for the Irish government to become involved. However, he is still hopeful of bringing Northern Ireland, London and Dublin politicians together and is said by colleagues to have taken new heart from the IRA's brief Christmas ceasefire.

Mr Brooke believes that if the ceasefire signifies a greater willingness to forswear violence then the importance of dialogue is increased. Northern Ireland ministers are, however, aware that there

are only a few months left to make progress in starting talks. After that, hopes will founder because parties will lose their negotiating flexibility in the run-up to the election.

Although various deadlines for the setting up of talks have come and gone, Mr Brooke has succeeded to a degree in confidence-building measures and in persuading the various parties that others are willing to co-operate in seeking peaceful solutions.

Yesterday, he said on Radio 4's *Today* programme that there was not a huge chasm about what stage the Irish government entered any talks. "We have made quiet progress in the latter part of 1990 towards bridging it." He said that he wanted to find ways of transferring more power, authority and responsibility to locally elected politicians, but added that he was able to achieve most when public gaze was not concentrated on the province.

"I think it is the case that

when, in the public mind. Northern Ireland is on the back-burner, to use the American phrase, we do perhaps make more progress. When I went to America, because of all the events happening in eastern Europe, Northern Ireland had not been much in the news and the interest in our affairs was wholly positive and constructive and not negative and critical. One does make more progress when one can get on with it in quiet."

Mr Brooke said that the central objective of the government's policy was to put an end to terrorism. "So much good could happen in Northern Ireland if we did. Beyond a security policy, and an attack on financial racketeering which provides so much of the financial resources for terrorism, the government necessarily has to sustain and support progress on economic development."

Northern Ireland's unemployment rate was still well above the average for the United Kingdom, he said, and

Cardinal Cahal Daly, spiritual head of Ireland's Catholics, who called yesterday for an enquiry on the checkpoint killing; Kathleen Gillespie and her son, whose father Patsy died when the IRA used him as a proxy bomber; and Mr Brooke, who has not given up hope

there also had to be progress on social policy, which meant the removal of perceived injustices and a greater understanding between the traditions in the province.

● Two loyalists were remanded in custody yesterday accused of trying to murder a man who had been severely

beaten after his car was seized on December 22. Harvey Gourlay, aged 23, and Richard Marshall, aged 24, both of Lisburn, Co Antrim, are accused of the attempted murder.

der of John Martin after his car had been hijacked in Belfast. They also face charges of kidnapping and unlawfully

detaining him. On being charged Gourlay was said by a police witness to have regretted everything that happened that night. Their alleged victim had now been discharged and was making a reasonable

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Leading article, page 11

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**BRADFORD
& BINGLEY**

THE government is urged today by a free market think-tank closely linked with ministers to seek a downgrading of the European Commission to an executive civil service as a British bargaining counter in the EC's inter-governmental conference on political union. Power would shift more decisively to the European Council of ministers (Our Political Editor writes).

commission's exclusive right to initiate legislation and the splitting of some of its functions. He calls for members of national parliaments to be enabled to affect the EC agenda, and rights for member states to opt out of initiatives.

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Frank Vibert, deputy director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, says Britain should seek the ending of the

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Abraham: new head for citizens' advice bureaux

New face leads the CABs into complex Nineties

THE Citizens' Advice Bureaux, the largest voluntary information service in Britain, enter 1991 with a new chief executive and a determination to cope with increasingly sophisticated queries. The service, dogged in the past by recruitment difficulties, still faces the prospect of being unable to attract enough volunteers in some areas. However, Ann Abraham, who today becomes chief executive of the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, believes that the organisation can meet the challenge with professionalism and dedication. "It is very important to maintain

Problems of funding and of recruiting face the new chief executive of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Ray Clancy reports

the range of subjects that we cover," Ms Abraham, who is aged 38, said. "They are becoming increasingly complex, but with our experience we can continue to provide." Ms Abraham, who has a post-

graduate diploma in management studies and ten years' experience in housing management, is only the second woman to head the organisation, which had its fiftieth anniversary in 1989. She has worked for the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Islington, and for the Housing Corporation. One problem facing the organisation in the next few years is that the return to employment of more women than ever before may seriously dent the number of volunteers. On the other hand, Ms Abraham believes that other groups, especially those seeking experience in information and

advice work, will be encouraged to give their time. "It is essential to keep in touch around the country, so I plan to spend the first few months visiting as many of our offices as possible," Ms Abraham said. "I think it is important that the local organisation works." Ms Abraham, who has had training in equal opportunities, public relations and public speaking, and holds a London university degree in German and philosophy, said: "My job is to bring together the many, varied elements that make up this association." She wanted to "take the

service into the Nineties with vibrancy and vigour" and tackle the problems of funding. Many local authorities have said that, due to the poll tax, they may not be able to continue financing CAB offices. Some may close if funds are withdrawn, but Ms Abraham does not expect long-term problems. "If councils closed CAB offices, they would find themselves with queues of people outside their town halls with problems," she said. Founded just before the second world war as an emergency service giving free help and advice, there are now over 1,000 CAB

offices in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Citizens' Advice Scotland provides hundreds more north of the border. It is estimated that at least seven million enquiries are dealt with a year. One solution to cuts in council support has been private funding for debt-advice centres. The service costs £33 million, of which £23 million comes from local authorities and the rest from the government. Of the 15,000 people working in the offices, 90 per cent are volunteers, the masters of every query imaginable, particularly about benefits, the poll tax and debt.

Census computer gets extra security to prevent sabotage

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE computer holding the 1991 census data has been fitted with special defences to prevent hackers entering the system or corrupting the information with electronic time-bombs. As preparations for the census on April 21 near completion, officials are taking unprecedented precautions to ensure that the data remains unadulterated and confidential. The nature of the counter-measures are secret. However, the British Computer Society, which has conducted an independent review of the security system, said yesterday that hacking posed a threat. John Southall, the society's registrar, said that people might

want to gain unauthorised access for numerous reasons, including sheer devilment. "We didn't look at hacking when we reviewed the security of the 1981 census because the phenomenon, in this country at least, didn't exist. You didn't have people sitting at home with modems attempting to break into networked computer systems. Now, the scenario is different." The society's recommendations on census security and the government's response are to be published in a white paper in March. An interim report on security has been sent to the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys. Early next month, the office will recruit 117,000 part-time counters to

deliver and collect the census forms, data from which will be used to shape the future of transport, housing, health care and training. Householders, who are required by law to complete the forms, will be asked to provide details of everyone staying at their homes during the night of April 21. The forms will be keyed by another 1,600 temporary staff into a purpose-built mainframe computer. First fruits of the £135 million exercise will come two months later with the results of the basic population count, followed by detailed statistical bulletins. Organisers are more anxious than usual to emphasise the confidentiality of the census. With about a fifth of residents in many English cities still refusing to pay the poll tax, there are worries that many might refuse to answer the questionnaires for fear that the information might be passed to council inspectors. To allay such anxieties, officials are barring people who have had anything to do with implementing the poll tax from acting as counters and are emphasising that the census office will not pass information on identified individuals or households to other government departments. Although every resident must be named in the questionnaires, names and addresses will not be entered into the computer and the forms will be kept secret for 100 years. Everyone employed in the census will receive strict instructions on confidentiality and told that unauthorised disclosure of data could lead to prosecution.

The census will include two new questions, which will show how many people suffer long-term illnesses or handicaps, and the country's racial mix. People will be asked to categorise themselves as being white, black-Caribbean, black-African, black-Other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Chinese. When a racial question was first proposed in the late 1970s many blacks and Asians reacted suspiciously. However, most now seem to accept that those seeking to eradicate racial discrimination need a more accurate idea of the size of the non-white population.

Boyson proposes scheme to halve poll tax payments

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A PLAN to keep the poll tax but halve the average bill to about £200 was put forward yesterday by a former Conservative local government minister. Sir Rhodes Boyson, one of the foremost Tory critics of the way that the government has implemented the tax, urged his colleagues to resist pressure for any return to the rates. He said that such a step, at present being studied in the review of local government finance, would lose the Tories millions of votes. In a new year message to his constituents, Sir Rhodes said that instead the government should pay for education, fire and police services out of central funds, give local authorities £5 billion to cut the flat-rate charge, and make other changes to ease the burden on non-working spouses and grown-up children living at home. He calculated that such an approach would cut the average poll tax bill to £200, and could be paid for by higher VAT or 3p to 4p more on the basic rate of income tax.

The MP for Brent North, who was local government minister in the run-up to the last election, said: "It's essential that the grave difficulties of the community charge are remedied and the average community charge greatly reduced. But this must not be done at the expense of a new set of losers who will carry their desperation and sense of grievance into the ballot box." He said that wives and husbands who stayed at home should be exempted from the poll tax. Charging them the full rate was a "tax on marriage and the proper care of young children" and was reprehensible. He also proposed a sliding scale of charges for young people living with their parents. Charging them the full rate was an "anti-family" arrangement that encouraged them to leave home, exacerbating expensive social problems such as homelessness. A scheme for a revived property tax to run alongside a slimmed down poll tax of about £100 a year has emerged as a front-runner in

the government's search for a long-term means of funding local government. Labour is committed to a return to a modernised version of the rates, taking into account ability to pay. Sir Rhodes insisted that if the government adopted such an approach it would bring only more misery. "I have found in my constituency and elsewhere great opposition to a return to a property tax. This is really a tax on savings and living standards — the very attributes the government should encourage in all its citizens. The single person, the retired couple, the one-parent family and many others would have to pay much more. He added: "It would prove a great vote loser among millions of the electorate."

Sir Rhodes said that education, police and fire-fighting were national services. Funding them from VAT or income tax would retain the principle of the poll tax — that all should pay towards the cost of local policies for which they vote. MORE and more grandparents are helping with their grandchildren's education, which is costing British families more than £1.8 billion a year, according to a survey published today. The report, from the market research company Mintel, says more families will be looking at ways to provide the fees, which are an average £3,000 a year for day schools and £9,000 for boarding. "The atmosphere is right," says the report. "Self-sufficiency is now de rigueur — home ownership, private health plans — and increasing numbers of parents are considering the private sector as the state education system runs into trouble after trouble." The number of elderly people is rising at the same time as the number of school-age children, and the report predicts a rise in

Grandparents' fillip for fees

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

independent school numbers. Grandparents are finding that because of the rise in house prices they have a capital base not previously available. "Grandparents will provide a fillip to the school fee planning industry, and the possibilities for investing lump sum pension payments, realising equity tied up in property and setting up savings plans for regular donations will increase." Two government saving schemes, personal equity plans and tax-exempt special savings, are good ways of planning for school fees, says Mintel. "The tax efficiency of these schemes results in the Inland Revenue in effect actually paying a part of the children's education. In the academic year 1989-90, 2,500 independent schools educated more than 6,000 pupils aged from five to 19 whose

parents faced a fee increase of between 11 and 12 per cent. Firms specialising in school fees will face increasingly knowledgeable people who have shown a growing understanding of the finance business in the past ten years. The 1987 stock market crash, changes in financial law and government handling of the economy have all resulted in an increasingly sophisticated base of potential customers, the report says. "Parents looking for school fees plans will become increasingly less satisfied with the off-the-shelf package and demand detailed information on the ways in which their money will be invested, anticipated rates of return, the risk-growth balance, and the implications for their overall tax position."

Mathew Wright, the first baby to be born in Britain this year, with his parents Linda and Ty Wright at Birmingham maternity hospital. Mathew made his appearance just seconds after the new year chimes of Big Ben began and ended 17 years of heartache for his parents. A test-tube baby, he weighed 8lb 5oz and proved third time lucky for Mr and Mrs Wright, whose two previous attempts at in-vitro fertilisation failed. "We have been trying for a

baby for 17 years. Five years ago we decided to try the test-tube method. This could have been our last chance and we are delighted," Mr Wright, of Droitwich. In Wales, twin girls were born in different years. Michelle Lewis gave birth to her first daughter, Jocelyn, 20 minutes before the new year at the Royal Gwent hospital, Newport. A few minutes after the chimes stopped, twin Tina was born.

Bridge repairs threaten London with extra traffic congestion

By PETER VICTOR

SEVERE traffic congestion is expected today in central and south London as motorists return from Christmas and New Year breaks to find Waterloo Bridge closed. AA Roadwatch forecasts widespread disruption as traffic is diverted over Lambeth, Westminster, Blackfriars and Southwark bridges, the last two of which are already restricted by repair and building works. The present Waterloo Bridge was built in 1934, and engineers are to replace the expansion joint on its south side because it is in a hazardous condition, the Department of Transport said yesterday. The joint on the north side was replaced early last year. Westminster city council is the local author-

ity responsible for the bridge, and its staff will do the work. Closure of the bridge was co-ordinated with police and the council, the DoT said. It was unable to say why the work was not done last week during the traffic lull of the festive season. "One would think that would be the case," a spokesman said. "I'm sure a major piece of work like this would be co-ordinated with the police, and presumably they have information on traffic flow which suggests otherwise. It does seem odd, on the face of it." The council said that police had advised it that this week would be best for the work. "They advised us that this was the time they thought best to manage the traffic," a spokesman said. "It may be that they had problems with staff and resources, although we don't have any information on that."

Scotland Yard said last night that this week was chosen to minimise disruption to traffic. "No problem is expected, the bridge was closed at the same time last year," a spokesman said. "Advance warning signs have been posted since December 18, warning drivers to use alternative routes. Closure last week would

have caused severe difficulties, particularly on New Year's eve with revellers travelling into the West End." The AA said that those travelling into London should expect delays and allow extra time for journeys. "A lot of people won't know this is happening so they're going to get a surprise," a spokesman said. "All the other bridges will be open and we will be broadcasting warnings on the radio, but a lot of people are likely to be delayed. It certainly seems it would have been more sensible to have done this work over the Christmas break. Throughout the country, a lot of roadworks were suspended over the holiday, perhaps on the grounds of cost." Whether the bridge will have to close again later this year, perhaps in March, remains to be seen. Repair work is needed on concrete pillars supporting its southern approach because of fire damage caused by dozers trying to keep warm in cardboard city under the area known as the Bullring. Lambeth council needs to spend about £200,000 on the work after radar scanning of the affected area.

Leading article, page 11

Royal archives show Prinny's cultural side

By RAY CLANCY

GEORGE IV's love of wine and his penchant for ageing mistresses ensured him a place in popular history as a degenerate king, but the good points of his reign are to be highlighted in an exhibition at Buckingham Palace later this year. Material from the royal archives, never seen in public before, provide a picture of a glorious past in which George III's corpulent eldest son, who was Prince of Wales then prince regent before becoming king in 1820, was a patron and connoisseur of the arts.

The king is remembered for his tremendous appetite for money, food, and women. After particular

periods of excess he had to mount his horse using a trolley and pulley system, but he was also a great collector, according to the exhibition, which opens at the Queen's Gallery on March 22. George, born in 1762, suffered the hardships of a particularly strict childhood and in his later years rebelled against his early life. Because of his father's madness he became prince regent in 1810, succeeded to the throne 10 years later and reigned for a decade.

His first affair is said to have occurred with an actress when he was aged 18. He was always in debt and married Princess Caroline of Brunswick in 1795 in return for Parliament paying his

debts of £650,000. He later tried to divorce her, which led to a national scandal and her death in 1821 ended an unfortunate episode in his reign. When George died he left bundles of letters from the 18 women he had loved.

The exhibition, the first of its kind, gives a fresh perception on the monarch described in Chambers Biographical Dictionary as "an undutiful son, a bad husband and a callous father". It demonstrates how George filled Carlton House in Pall Mall, his London home, with priceless paintings and furniture.

He is portrayed as a patron of English artists, including Reynolds, Stubbs, Hogarth and Gains-

borough. He gathered unrivalled collections of French furniture and porcelain, English gold and silver plate, and Russian imperial swords. Many of the finest pieces will be on display.

The exhibition does not ignore his excesses. It chronicles the great fetes and lavish parties held at Carlton House. The day after one party George opened the house to the public and a mob descended filled with curiosity. The Morning Chronicle reported: "About a dozen females were so completely disrobed in the squeeze, they were obliged to send home for clothes, before they could venture out into the streets."



Public view: George IV as a gross voluptuary

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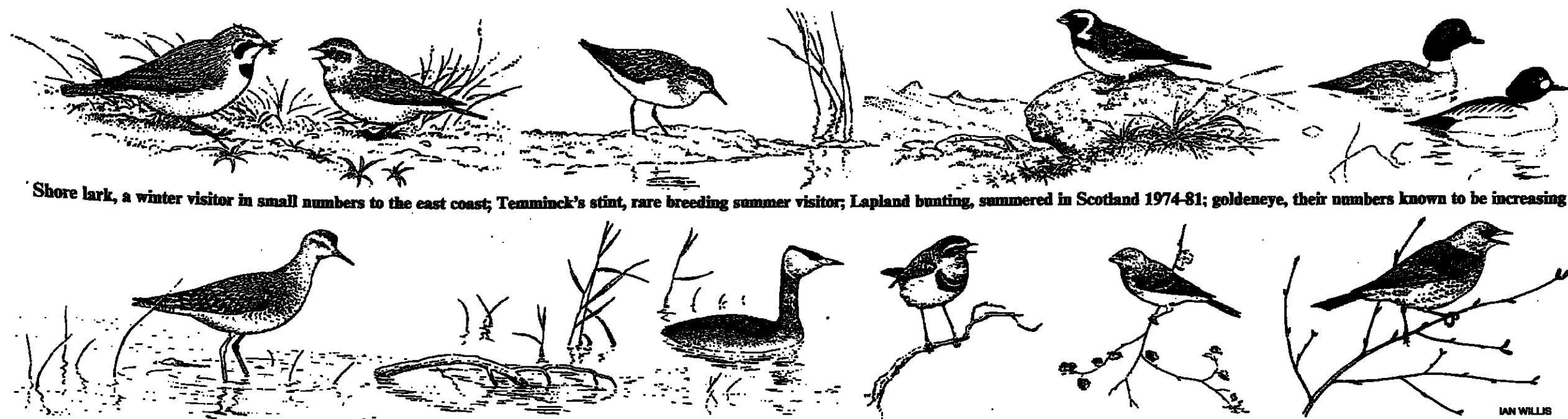


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Bird experts are mystified by Scandinavian invaders



Shore lark, a winter visitor in small numbers to the east coast; Temminck's stint, rare breeding summer visitor; Lapland bunting, summered in Scotland 1974-81; goldeneye, their numbers known to be increasing

Wood sandpiper, which has nested in Scottish Highlands since 1959; red-necked grebe, a potential colonist; bluethroat (left) and scarlet rosefinch, both rare visitors; fieldfare, which breeds annually in Scotland

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

MORE than a dozen species of rare wild birds have colonised Scotland in the past thirty years from Scandinavia, according to the first official catalogue of British birds in need of special protection. Future investigations are likely to look at the possible role of climate change.

Leading ornithologists are mystified by the phenomenon, which is disclosed in the pages of *Red Data Birds in Britain*, a list compiled by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Nature Conservancy Council of the 117 British species considered endangered, vulnerable, or internationally important.

The Scottish invasion is not spelled out in the book but is clear from the individual entries, and was confirmed by Richard Porter, head of species management for the RSPB and one of the authors. He said: "It is a curious phenomenon, and any investigation should raise the question of whether climate change might in some way be responsible."

Birds listed as having in recent years bred in Scotland for the first time include wood sandpiper (from 1959); fieldfare (1967); bluethroat (1968); goldeneye (1970); Temminck's stint (1971); shore lark (1973); Lapland bunting (from 1977); purple sandpiper (1978); red-necked grebe (1980); and scarlet rosefinch (1982). Also, the brambling, which bred in Scotland in an isolated case in 1920, began regularly breeding between 1968

and 1979; the snowy owl bred in Shetland from 1967 to 1975; and the wryneck and the red-backed shrike, which were becoming extinct in England, colonised Scotland in the Sixties and Seventies, although in 1990 it is thought they have finally ceased to breed in Britain.

The normal breeding range of these species is Scandinavia and northern Europe, going up to the

Arctic, and most of them have bred in northern Scotland or the Highlands. Mr Porter said: "A lot of the conditions in Scotland are not dissimilar to Scandinavia and perhaps a very slight change of the climate might be influential. We simply don't know enough about it, but it's worth posing the question of why it's happening."

Red Data supplies conservationists for the first time with a

systematic guide to protection priorities for the birds of Britain. The 117 species selected as needing special attention from the full list of nearly 550 birds known to have occurred in this country have been chosen for four main reasons: rarity (fewer than 300 breeding pairs); vulnerability (more than 50 per cent of the population occurring on fewer than ten sites); declining numbers

(more than a 50 per cent decline over the past 25 years); and international importance (more than 20 per cent of the western European population occurring in Britain).

After the red-backed shrike and the wryneck, both thought to have ceased to breed in Britain in 1990, the most endangered regular breeders are the corncock, a familiar bird of the countryside

fifty years ago but now confined to the Scottish islands, and the roseate tern, whose numbers have crashed for unknown reasons. Once-common birds whose future is increasingly at risk include the barn owl, the merlin, the nightjar and the grey partridge, which is down by 75 per cent from its pre-war numbers.

Loss of habitat caused by modern intensive farming and

changes in land use are often the reason for the declines, although the book lists some of more unusual threats to individual species. Slavonian grebes are threatened by the stocking of Scottish lochs with rainbow trout, which compete with the birds for insect food. Red-necked phalaropes are threatened by bird watchers trying to photograph them on the nest. Divers are at risk from oil pollution.

Red Data also lists success stories. The osprey, so long thought of as breeding on a single tree at Loch Garten in Speyside, Highland, is represented in Scotland by 54 pairs, and 400 pairs of avocets, which recolonised East Anglia only after the war, breed at 17 sites in southern England. Perhaps most remarkable is that the population of the peregrine falcon, nearly driven to extinction in the Fifties and Sixties, now stands at more than 900 pairs.

Mr Porter said: "The point of *Red Data Birds in Britain* is to get across to decision-makers in wildlife conservation what the bird priorities really are, and to deprive planners of the excuse of ignorance when developments threaten important species. I hope we can get it onto the shelves of every planner in Britain."

Red Data Birds in Britain, by Leo Batten, Colin Bibby, Peter Clement, Graham Elliot and Richard Porter (published for Nature Conservancy Council and RSPB by T and A D Poyser, London; £18)



New year twitch: bird watchers enjoy their first outing of 1991 hoping for a glimpse of a grey phalarope at Abberton reservoir near Colchester yesterday

Culling, page 12

Police chiefs fear loss of independence

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

CHIEF constables are worried that financial packages being offered by police authorities to increase senior police salaries could lessen their traditional independence of operational action.

Some are concerned that the packages carry a commitment to work with or imply working under chief executives and other shire officials, thereby reducing the power of chief constables.

At the same time, senior police officers have become increasingly anxious that salaries and benefits have fallen well below local government levels, making it less attractive for talented officers to seek promotion. The packages, which are reportedly being offered by several shire authorities, offer as much as 10 per cent extra on an annual salary as a productivity bonus, although "productivity" can be loosely defined.

Chief officers are paid according to the ranking of their force within six bands determined by the size of the population they police. Salaries set by the Home Office and local government representatives range from £48,105 for the chief constable of a large urban force, to £31,029 for the smallest forces. Unlike local government officials, do not receive expenses or cars or help in moving between forces.

Pay increases for senior officers have been running parallel to the annual awards made to the rest of the service, based on a formula taking into account the underlying trend of pay rises in industry and elsewhere. Last year the Home Office agreed that senior officers with several years' experience in their ranks could receive extra money later this year.

Sir Peter Imbert, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who has up to another two years to serve, is awaiting a date for a single bypass operation. In spite of his condition he is said to be keen to return to his post. The surgery means, however, that he will not return for some time, making it increasingly likely that Sir John Dellow, aged 59, his deputy, will

be asked to remain beyond his planned retirement in March.

The Home Office is, however, unlikely to be content to leave the force without an experienced officer in charge. If Sir Peter decides not to continue, the Home Office would have Sir John available and able to step into the post to provide continuity and experience. None of the four assistant commissioners has been in his post for longer than 18 months.



Sir Peter: waiting for a heart bypass operation

Kasparov rated higher than Fischer

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

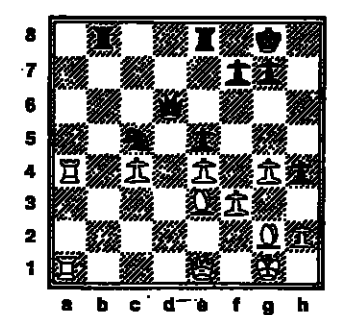
GARY Kasparov tops the world chess rankings issued yesterday by the World Chess Federation in Lucerne, Switzerland, with a rating of 2,800 on its scale, the Elo list. There is an immense gulf before the second-ranked player, Anatoly Karpov, at 2,725.

Kasparov's 2,800 is a jump over the previous record rating in chess history, that of 2,785 by Bobby Fischer in 1972.

The other top places are dominated by Russians. In third position is Boris Gelfand on 2,700, and Vassily Ivanchuk is fourth on 2,695. Fifth place is taken by Evgeny Barceev, who is playing in the foreign and colonial tournament in Hastings.

The top two British grandmasters are Nigel Short on 2,635 and Jon Speelman on 2,610. They are due to meet in London starting on January 27 to decide qualification for the next leg of the world chess championship.

Kasparov celebrated his position once again as the world's most highly ranked player, with the highest rating in chess history, by clinching the lion's share of the \$3 million prize in the World Chess Championship in Lyons, France, and the Koroff Trophy, a gold and diamond encrusted pair of intertwined capital "Ks". Kasparov did this by forcing a draw in the 24th and final game of the championship match against



24th game's drawn position

Karpov. Before the game, Kasparov led by 12 points to 11 and, as defending champion, had retained the title after game 22, when he scored 12 points.

Playing out games 23 and 24 has been regarded as a phoney war. Indeed, Kasparov reprieved his opponent on the 36th move when, having outplayed him and won two bishops and a pawn for a rook, he offered Karpov a draw.

Kasparov's advantage in material would, in the general run of things, have been more than adequate for a victory. However, in order to clinch the prize fund and the trophy, Kasparov let his opponent off the hook. Moves of the game follow with a diagram of the final position. Kasparov is playing white.

The final result of the championship was Kasparov 12½ points, Karpov 11½. The match, which lasted three months and began in New York then moved to Lyons, has witnessed some of the finest

Kasparov white, Karpov black			
White	Black	White	Black
1 Nf3	Nf6	10 Bg2	Nb7
2 c4	e5	11 Qd2	Nc5
3 Nc3	Sb4	12 Qd3	Nc5
4 Qd2	Q-d4	13 Qd3	Nc5
5 e3	Sb4	14 Qd3	Nc5
6 Qcc3	b6	15 Qd3	Nc5
7 b4	a6	16 Qd3	Nc5
8 Qd3	Sb7	17 Qd3	Nc5
9 c5	27 Qd3	18 Qd3	Nc5
10 Bg2	Nb7	19 Qd3	Nc5
11 Q-d2	Rd8	20 Qd3	Nc5
12 Qd3	Rd8	21 Qd3	Nc5
13 Qd3	Rd8	22 Qd3	Nc5
14 Qd3	Rd8	23 Qd3	Nc5
15 Qd3	Rd8	24 Qd3	Nc5
16 Qd3	Rd8	25 Qd3	Nc5
17 Qd3	Rd8	26 Qd3	Nc5
18 Qd3	Rd8	27 Qd3	Nc5

Kasparov accepts draw

chess between these two players, who so tower above their contemporaries. It is their fifth match in half a decade and Kasparov leads by just three wins over their lifetime score against each other. Many of the games of this latest match, numbers two and 20 for example, will enter the record books as classics.

Nevertheless, it is evident, given the length of the match, that improvements will have to be made to render the games more accessible to the public. At the moment, both players are allowed to take three time-outs each, at just a few hours' notice, thus effectively cancelling the day's play, disappointing spectators and making the job of media reporters unnecessarily problematic. It would surely be more sensible to schedule the time-outs.

The difficulties were compounded in Lyons when the

organisers themselves took an unscheduled time-out just before Christmas, resulting in a period of ten consecutive days in which only one game was played.

Attention will also have to be given to the weight of play. There are at present three games a week, and after five hours of play and 40 moves games are adjourned. With modern chess theory extending well beyond move 20, that is no longer viable. All modern tournaments and, indeed, qualifying matches for the championship are held in six-hour sessions during which 60 moves must be played.

Finally, in order to avoid endless deadlocks, it is an established rule of world chess championships, dating back to their origins in 1886, that the champion retains his title as soon as he has scored 50 per cent of the possible points. Kasparov had done this brilliantly and convincingly by game 22, yet an outdated rule states that the prize fund, and any other trophies available, are divided up according to the points eventually scored, not according to who has won the championship.

Thus, the chess world was faced with the spectacle of Kasparov, having already retained his title and unable to concentrate, being forced to play out the ritual of the final two games. By general consent, the quality of these final two games was poor and many experts now question whether such irrelevant extras should be indulged in the future.

Meanwhile, in the fourth round of the British premier grandmaster tournament, the Foreign and Colonial International Chess Challenge, in Hastings, there were some serious upsets leading to changes in the league.

John Speelman (England) lost to Evgeny Barceev (Soviet Union); Murray Chandler (London) defeated Daniel King (London); Tony Costen (Hampshire) beat the overnight leader Bent Larsen (Denmark), while Hecij Olafsson (Iceland) drew with Gynla Sax (Hungary).

Scores after four rounds are: Barceev, Larsen, Olafsson and Sax 2½ points; Chandler and Speelman 2; Costen 1½; King ½.

'Heart fake' prisoner escapes

An armed robber serving a nine-year jail sentence escaped yesterday after apparently faking a heart attack and tricking staff into rushing him to hospital. Swaleside jail, on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent, became the second jail within 24 hours to suffer an escape when Roland Parry, aged 26, fled from a first-floor ward of the Medway hospital at Gillingham.

Late yesterday police were still searching for Parry, of Morden, south London, as well as four prisoners who broke out of Durham jail on New Year's eve. Police have described two of the men as highly dangerous.

Sight returned

Jack Conway, aged 91, of Thornaby-on-Tees, who was blind for 23 years, recovered his sight on New Year's eve after a corneal transplant at the North Riding hospital in Middlesbrough.

Porsche lay-offs

Thirty-six workers are being made redundant at the British headquarters of the German car-maker Porsche after sales slumped by 450 cars to 2,796 last year. The company predicts that sales this year will fall to about 2,500 cars.

Casualty gift

Businessmen have donated £3,000 to keep the casualty unit of a hospital in Sudbury, Suffolk, open after health chiefs threatened to close it as uneconomic.

Timbers found

Marine archaeologists have found ships' timber, thought to be Viking and medieval, in the bed of Buss Creek, Southwold, Suffolk, which is being cleared by a mechanical digger.

Fear for babies

Health officials in Rotherham are investigating reports of circumcisions being performed on babies at home. They believe that up to 40 male Muslim babies a year could be affected.

New breed of judge for a changing court

The small claims court, set up 17 years ago as a 'people's court' for settling disputes without lawyers, will take on a bigger role under reforms coming in this year, Frances Gibb writes in this second and concluding report

and they are settled quickly, cheaply and informally.

Many more people will be encouraged to use this court by the doubling from July this year to £1,000 of the upper limit on claims within its scope. Officials estimate that cases could rise initially by 7,000 over the present 50,000 disputes that end up as hearings in the court each year.

That 50,000 is thought to be only a tenth of all the disputes started under the small claims procedure. Yet, despite its wide use (the total number of cases is double that tried in the county courts) criticisms of the system

remain, particularly of delays, complexity, the need for expert advice, and formality.

The reforms being brought in by the Lord Chancellor's Department are intended to meet perceived defects in the workings of the system and its arbitration of disputes by the registrars who will become the new district judges.

Some reforms are already in force, such as the registrar's power to refer a dispute to a full trial in open court (small claims are in private) if he considers it too complex to be dealt with under small claims arbitration. This should encourage the bring-

ing of more simple personal injury claims in the small claims court. There will also be a compulsory preliminary hearing in personal injury cases that are brought as small claims.

Another reform will give a claimant an absolute right to have a lay representative of his choice at the arbitration. At present, this is at the court's discretion.

The training of registrars will also be improved to ensure greater consistency of approach when handling small claims, most of which are for money owed, although they may also be for damage caused to the claimant or his property, and may arise from an accident, injury, faulty goods, or bad workmanship.

Finally, a new, much simpler step-by-step guide to bringing a small claim, illustrated with cartoons, will be sent to all courts, advice bureaux and libraries.

Concluded

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Riding the roller-coaster of British esteem worldwide

MORE than two years ago the foreign secretary's private office compiled a spoof newspaper page attacking the Foreign Office, mimicking the spiky prose of "The Sun Says" leader column. "Whingeing pin-striped poofers," it growled, tearing a metaphorical mouthful from a diplomatic trouser leg.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, then foreign secretary, used it to hilarious effect in a speech at a leaving party for his press secretary, Christopher Meyer. It was startling to hear him poke implicit fun at his department's reputation for political wetness. When critics call the Foreign Office the office that looks after foreigners, their humour is intended as a weapon. The innuendo, a lack of regard for national interests, is unjustified but often deeply felt.

Whoever wrote the spoof (Tony Galsworthy, his former private secretary, could be a candidate) presumably wanted to show that British diplomats have much to endure but can laugh at

themselves. There was also a subliminal message: if British foreign policy attracts strong criticism, it cannot be dismissed as irrelevant.

The day I joined the diplomatic desk of *The Times* a colleague said I was wasting my time. "Why should anyone abroad care what Britain thinks?" she asked. "Isn't it time we stopped trying to convince ourselves we matter?" It was not a new thought. The British have been asking themselves variations of that question since Dean Acheson told the West Point Military Academy in 1962: "Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role."

Instead of rising to Acheson's implied challenge, Britain's self-esteem headed downwards for the next two decades. The small-mindedness of the Wilson years and the little-England outlook of the first Thatcher government were depressing for those reporting British policy at the time. Edward Heath's wider vision had



Andrew McEwen, left, diplomatic editor of *The Times*, in a farewell article on his departure for Italy, sums up 20 years of reporting British foreign policy. He has followed the fortunes of six foreign secretaries while the country's status in world politics lost and recovered much of its former lustre

been a relief, especially on Europe, but was spoiled by bungling at home.

How many people would argue now that Britain is irrelevant? Not many in Moscow or Washington. President Saddam Hussein, perhaps? He might say that in public, but is too well-informed to believe it. The Thatcher effect on Britain's standing abroad cannot be overstated. As one who rubbished her soon after she became leader of the opposition I happily eat my words. An early visit she made to Paris, where I was based, left a miserable impression.

But as she matured in the job she became an expert in East-West affairs, Arab-Israel issues

and Group of Seven matters. However much one disagreed with her policies, her effect on the way others viewed Britain and the British viewed themselves was undeniable. She shared with Mikhail Gorbachev and F. W. de Klerk the paradox of being far more popular abroad than at home. Her departure does not mean that Britain will return to the also-rans. If John Major and Douglas Hurd handle the Gulf emergency well, its stature could continue to grow.

But does it matter any longer? Just as one doubt seems vanquished another is born. If the European Community nations are moving towards a common foreign policy, how can one

nation hope to remain individually visible? If we continue to try to stand out, will we not make the adjustment to a new European identity even harder?

If Acheson were alive, he would say that Britain had lost an empire but found a role in Europe. Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister who fought against federalism, will have an unwanted place in history as the leader who crossed the sovereignty rubicon. Whoever convinced her in 1985 that the Single European Act would have limited impact did her a disservice. It was the beginning of the end of Britain's already-circumscribed independence.

As an advocate of greater unity

I welcome the outcome, but not the way it came about. It was the greatest failure of foreign policy since Suez. How could Britain allow itself to be swept into an embryonic federation, against its stated policy, without a general election or a referendum?

Britain lost its case at the "informal" (but very important) EC summit in Rome in October. Mr Major and Mr Hurd bought time at the follow-up summit in December, but served the party rather than the nation. The need to heal Conservative divisions over Europe was understandable; the greater duty was to present the issues clearly.

Their policies may result in some watering-down of a new European treaty. They will not prevent it being the foundation stone of a quasi-federal Europe that the British public have not yet chosen.

Their apparent unwillingness to permit a democratic choice has given a hostage to fortune: a future nationalist orator could

use it to awaken anti-European feelings. Despite this, I complete my reporting of British foreign policy with enhanced respect for the Foreign Office. Its overall standards of competence, loyalty and hard work deserve appreciation. Praise and criticism are not incompatible: any government department needs both.

Mr Hurd is the most articulate, competent, civilised and personally likeable foreign secretary I have known.

Sir Geoffrey shared these qualities but expressed himself more obliquely. Mr Major was in office for too short a time to judge, but initial impressions were favourable.

Lord Carrington's resignation over the Falklands left his honour undamaged. Dr David Owen was respected for his clarity and firmness and ruled the Foreign Office with an iron rod. James Callaghan, as foreign secretary, made up for much of the damage caused by his prime minister and was well respected.

New year will bring hardship, Poles and Czechoslovaks told

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

POLAND and Czechoslovakia were given a warning yesterday that they must face up to economic hardship as they enter 1991.

Vaclav Havel told Czechoslovaks in his new year address that "what looked like a neglected house a year ago is in fact a ruin".

While in Warsaw, the head of the central planning office, Jerzy Osiatynski, gave a warning that Poland was in an economic quicksand. He told the leadership yesterday to observe a single basic commandment: "thou shalt not print empty money."

Both President Havel and the Polish leader, President Walesa, must now convince their nations that austerity programmes started last year cannot be allowed to falter because of the misery they

will cause among their people. President Havel urged his countrymen to have faith and hope in the new year. "I will certainly tell you nothing new if I announce to you today that there are hard times ahead," he said yesterday. "A year ago, we were all united by the joy of breaking the bars of totalitarianism... today we are all made a little neurotic by the weight of freedom."

Mr Havel spoke on the day formally designated as the start of broad reform of the outmoded and inefficient economy developed by the communists. The plans call for widespread privatisation of state-owned enterprises, price deregulation and the closure of some unproductive economic ventures.

Potential inflation is estimated at between 30 and 50 per cent in 1991, with unemployment — which did not exist under the communists — forecast to reach up to 10 per cent.

"In the trials that lie ahead, no matter how difficult they may be, we must not lose hope," Mr Havel said. "Without hope... they would not be trials, but mere suffering."

The president said the main task of the country's federal and two regional parliaments would be to draft and adopt three constitutional changes that would give a "final shape" to the legal framework of the state.

Czechoslovakia hoped that a summit of the Warsaw Pact, which was to have been held in Budapest early in November but was postponed at Moscow's request, would be held soon, possibly this month. The meeting would mark the dissolution of its military structures, said Mr Havel.

The president emphasised that his country wanted closer collaboration with Nato, but did not intend at the moment to join the alliance.

Poland meanwhile faces its own trials, despite a year of strict austerity that saw a drop of nearly 40 per cent in living standards, according to the central planning office chief.

Mr Osiatynski assessed last year's achievements of the outgoing administration of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. They included a

stronger zloty that is internally convertible into hard currency, and the hesitant beginnings of market institutions.

Layoffs in state industries seeking to become more efficient have raised the number of unemployed to more than one million, or 6 per cent of the work force.

The goods and services market is evident throughout Poland with the reappearance of long-vanished items on store shelves. Warsaw has become a kiosk city, with entrepreneurs operating out of tiny wooden stalls.

But Mr Osiatynski noted that while the outgoing government's economic plan tamed inflation, it did not eliminate it, and prices are now 70 per cent higher than a year ago.

President Walesa is committed to continuing the austerity programme, but with some modifications. Although he won the backing of nearly 75 per cent of the electorate in the presidential election on December 9, many have expressed frustration with the continual sacrifices.

Mr Walesa said in his new year speech that he wanted the incoming government to focus on the economy and urged Poland's bickering political forces to unite under this common goal.

This year, the prices of goods and services are expected to rise by 32 per cent — half of that amount in the first quarter. Food alone will rise by 24 per cent, while the prices of services are expected to jump by 54 per cent, according to government figures quoted by the newspaper *Zycie Warszawy*.

Prices of rents and electricity are both expected to jump by 100 per cent while real wages are expected to increase by only 2 per cent, although the nominal jump will be 45 to 50 per cent to compensate for inflation.

In 1990, incomes dropped by 14 per cent and production in state-owned industry slid by 20 per cent. The one bright spot was in exports, where Poland recorded a 30 per cent growth last year.

The most important change in 1991 will be the transition into a hard-currency system of trade among countries of the former Soviet bloc.



Promised land: three generations of Soviet immigrants lead the way down the steps of an aircraft which landed in Tel Aviv

Israel welcomes its 200,000th immigrant

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

A SOVIET Jewish engineer from the Ural mountains became Israel's 200,000th immigrant of 1990. On arrival at Ben Gurion airport just before midnight on New Year's eve, Igor Goldfarb, aged 25, said he wanted to marry an Israeli girl.

"I especially didn't get married before coming," a happy Mr Goldfarb, who arrived with his mother, told cabinet ministers and well-wishers who greeted him and 400 others with singing and dancing. Soviet immigrants now form the overwhelming majority of those coming to Israel. Of the 200,000 who flooded in last year, 184,000 came from the Soviet Union, according to official figures. In 1989 Soviet Jews made up half the total influx of 24,656.

Despite the official reception for Mr Goldfarb, who says he will join

his brother living near Tel Aviv, this enormous increase in the number of people desperate to flee life in the Soviet Union for a brighter future is placing considerable strain on Israel and causing dissension among officials responsible for their welfare.

Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, the immigration minister, gave Mr Goldfarb a flag and his mother Nina a pair of ritual candlesticks, but added "We'll try to help you settle. It won't be easy."

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency responsible for bringing immigrants to Israel, boycotted the welcoming ceremony, however. He said he would only celebrate when Israel had absorbed all immigrants and offered them housing and jobs.

Rabbi Peretz said Israel would

have to pitch tents for some 10,000 families awaiting permanent shelter because of the huge influx. The stream appears unending. Israel expects another 800,000 immigrants in 1991 and in 1992, swelling its population by a fifth in three years.

Israeli television said some 1,500 immigrants had settled this year in Ariel in the occupied West Bank, more than in any other Jewish settlement. Israeli leaders, under pressure from the United States, which regards the settlements as an obstacle to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, insist they do not direct immigrants to occupied territories.

But Israel does offer economic incentives to Jews who choose to live there, and says its policy is to let immigrants settle wherever they like.



Goldfarb: he wants to marry an Israeli

Alarm over Albanian refugees

CONSTANTINE Mitsotakis, the Greek prime minister, alarmed by a flood of Albanian refugees pouring into Greece, will visit Tirana on January 13 and 14 to urge the Greek minority to stay put while the Albanians launch planned reforms (Our Foreign Staff writes).

Some 3,000 men, women and children have fled Albania on foot in the past 24 hours alone, police said yesterday. The exodus was the biggest into Greece for many years and would have been impossible before Albania recently began gradually opening up after four decades of Stalinist isolationism. In December more than 2,000 Albanian refugees, mostly ethnic Greeks, crossed the once heavily guarded border to seek political asylum.

Meanwhile, President Alija of Albania yesterday promised his country a year of "far-reaching changes" in a new year broadcast from Tirana. He reiterated his plans to go ahead with elections in February in spite of the opposition's calls for a postponement to allow democratic forces a chance to organise.

Volunteers move

Moscow — Soviet soldiers will now serve in the southern Caucasus region only on a voluntary basis, Tass reported, quoting a defence ministry spokesman. The measure, also affecting sailors with the Caspian fleet, was taken because of the difficult conditions in the region, which includes the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Lieutenant-colonel Nikolai Medvedev, from the ministry's press centre, said. (AFP)

Romania criticised

Geneva — More than a year after the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanians continue to live under the same dictatorship with a different face, according to the exiled King Michael of Romania. In a new year message the former monarch sharply criticised the Bucharest authorities for "brutally" interrupting his visit to the country by deporting him last Wednesday, soon after he had arrived for his first visit since being forced into exile in 1947. (AP)

Marx deducted

Neuhardenberg — The town of Neuhardenberg in eastern Germany has resumed the name of Neuhausen, which it was obliged to drop after the second world war. The town, 20 miles from the border with Poland, and which has 3,700 inhabitants, was the first place selected by the former communist government in 1949 to be renamed after Karl Marx. (AFP)

A jewel in the Soviet crown threatens to become a thorn in Yeltsin's side

From BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

WHEN a Soviet territory five times the size of France claims absolute sovereignty over its fabulous reserves of diamonds, gold, tin, coal, gas, forestry and fur, that would appear to be bad news for conservatives in Moscow who want to preserve the Soviet Union.

But not, it seems, when the territory is Yakutia, a sprawling wasteland of icy mountains and tundra with barely a million inhabitants, astonishing climatic extremes, and the potential to become a sharp thorn in the side of Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation.

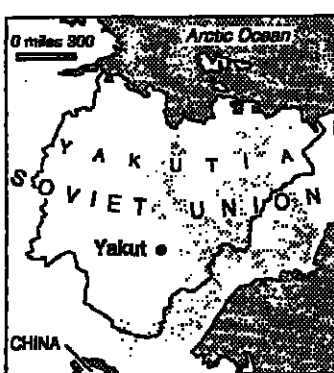
Mikhail Nikolayev, president of what since September has called itself the Yakut-Sakha Soviet Socialist Republic, has been given four columns of dense print to lay out his grievances in the daily *Soyetskaya Rossiya* — a bastion of conservatism.

He denounced the "thieving" and environmentally ruinous policies of the colonialists from Moscow, using the sort of language that would cause apoplexy to the editors of that newspaper if it were used by a Ukrainian or an Uzbek.

But the publication of Mr Nikolayev's case does not mean that *Soyetskaya Rossiya* has undergone a dramatic conversion to the cause of radical nationalism. What it does reflect, almost certainly, is the mounting cam-

paign by Moscow's communist leadership to stop Mr Yeltsin consolidating the Russian Federation's independence, by giving him a taste of his own medicine.

The conservatives' apparent tactic is to back the growing moves towards greater independence by the 16 autonomous republics which lie inside the Russian



Federation, ranging from tiny bits of the northern Caucasus, to Yakutia, easily the largest and richest. With the Russian Federation's own status the object of acrimonious disputes with Mikhail Gorbachev, the growing militancy of the 16 "mini-republics" has the potential to create a hopeless constitutional mess.

The control of gold, oil and diamonds are at the heart of Mr Yeltsin's dispute with the central authorities. Orthodox communists

appear to have calculated that the proclamations of sovereignty made by Yakutia and most of the other autonomous regions within Russia are the best way of keeping natural resources out of Mr Yeltsin's hands.

It was to pre-empt such tactics that Mr Yeltsin paid a sudden, spectacular visit to Yakutia last week, just when President Gorbachev was embroiled with the Congress of People's Deputies — and with an explosive budgetary dispute with the Russian Federation government.

While aides to Mr Gorbachev spluttered their amazement that Mr Yeltsin could leave Moscow at such a time, the Russian leader dropped in on remote Arctic settlements and commiserated with reindeer-breeding nomads on the lack of food, fuel and vehicles. He also visited a diamond factory which accounts for 85 per cent of Soviet production. With characteristic bluntness, he lambasted the crudity of production techniques.

But Mr Nikolayev, writing for *Soyetskaya Rossiya*, showed little appreciation of the Russian leader's interest in his territory.

Echoing one of the conservative camp's more ingenious arguments, he said the Russian Congress recently convened by Mr Yeltsin had improperly overruled the sovereign rights of the 16 mini-

republics when it gave conditional approval to private farming. What right, he asked, had the Russian Federation to dictate property arrangements when the authorities of Yakutia had already, in the name of its people, proclaimed exclusive ownership of the territory's "land, mineral wealth, animal and vegetable life"?

Whatever his political purpose, some of his arguments to the effect that Yakutia has had a raw deal carried conviction. Despite the territory's "fabled" wealth, many of its inhabitants lived in grinding poverty.

Diamond mining had destroyed huge areas of forest, decimating the animal species which native peoples hunted for a living. In other regions, a "lunar landscape" had been left by gold mining.

The Moscow-based state enterprises that exploited Yakutia's resources exported all but 13 per cent of the wealth produced on the territory.

The conservatives in Moscow, whose concern is to keep the whole Soviet Union as tightly bound together as possible, may feel they have found a friend in Mr Nikolayev. But ultimately, his grievances — and the questions they raise about the tropy-turvy nature of Soviet economic development — may prove more threatening to Kremlin hardliners than they ever are to Mr Yeltsin.

French hunters come under fire

From PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

PUT a hunting rifle into the hands of a Frenchman and he will readily blaze away at anything that rustles in the undergrowth. An estimated 50 million animals and birds are shot every year: wild boar, stag, hares and rabbits, flocks of pigeon, pheasant and turtle dove.

But invariably the bag also includes a few brace of fellow hunters, accidentally dispatched in the excitement of the moment, and a sprinkling of innocent bystanders incautious enough to be within range of Europe's most dedicated shots. Throw in self-inflicted deaths arising from careless handling of loaded guns and it is a rare year when the human toll falls much below 30.

At least three hunters were killed during the week after Christmas, when trigger fingers seem particularly twitchy. Another 3,000 or so people will have been wounded in the field over the past 12 months, according to the French insurance industry, which pays out 70 million francs (a little under £7 million) in claims.

With 1.8 million hunting licences now in circulation, and a substantial number of unlicensed enthusiasts, the French outdo even the Italians in their passion for killing creatures great and small. In strongholds like the Auvergne, Aquitaine and Lorraine, they constitute a powerful political lobby, with active

support from local councillors. If France's anti-hunting activists are to be believed, this lobby also operates at the highest level of state. Last June, aides to President Mitterrand received a delegation from the Gironde, led by two local MPs, who sought official approval to shoot at migratory birds passing through their region.

According to Theodore Monod, who is president of the country's main pressure group against hunting, "sordid and false political factors" prevent the widespread opposition to the slaughter of wild animals from finding a proper public voice.

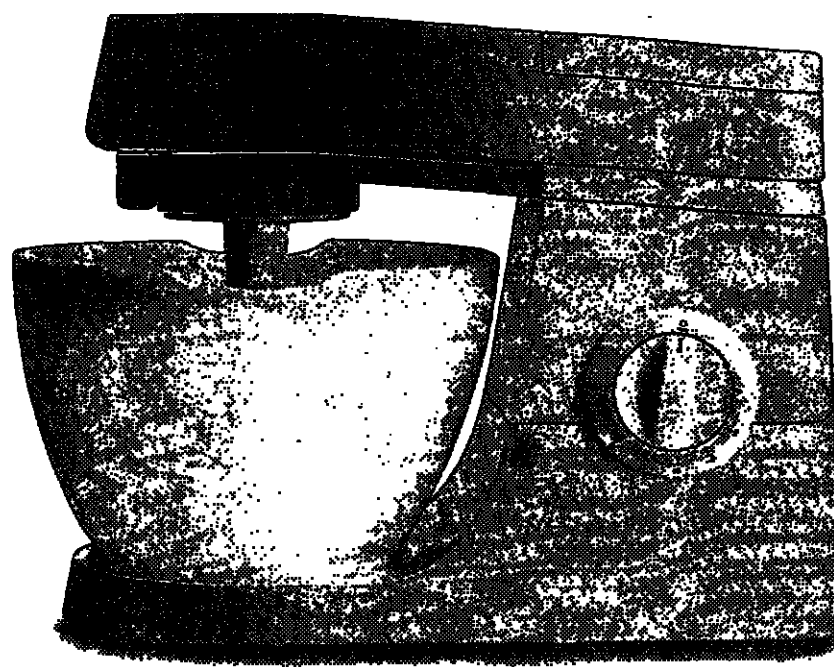
Mr Monod has every reason to detest the hunting community: last October, his brother Claude, also a prominent opponent of *la chasse*, was shot dead by a huntsman who apparently mistook him for big game as he was gathering mushrooms. A couple of weeks later, a bullet that brought down a roe-deer tore straight through its body and killed a man standing 30 yards away.

The destructive power of many "sporting" rifles now used in France is also causing growing alarm: some ammunition can kill at distances of two or three miles. In January last year, a woman died instantly after a bullet fired by hunters on a nearby hill pierced the windscreen of her car and struck her in the head.

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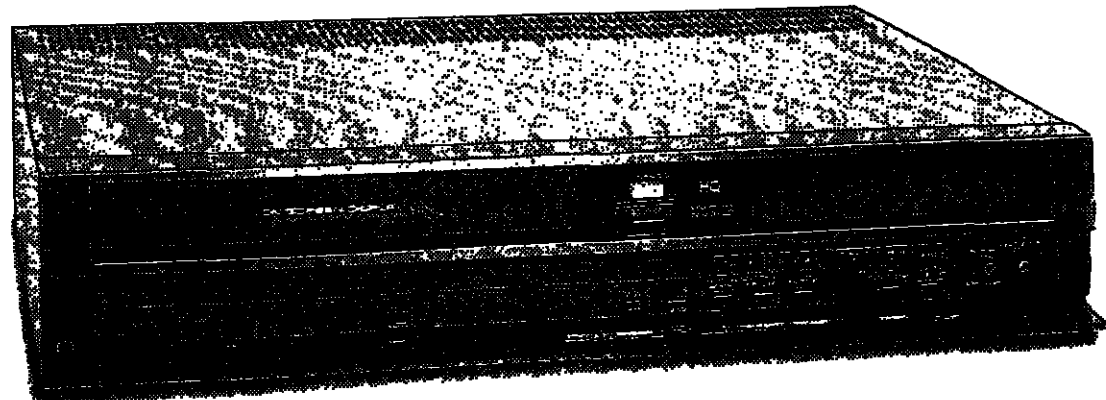
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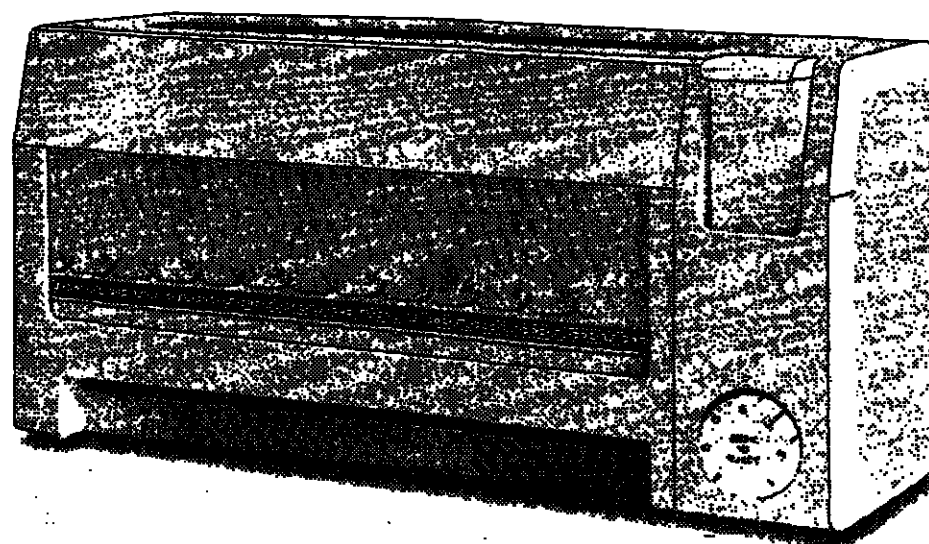
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مكتبة من الأصل

Britain remains guarded over EC initiative to prevent war

By ANDREW MCEWEN, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN began cutting its embassy staff in Baghdad yesterday, while hinting at a more receptive attitude than expected towards a European Community initiative to prevent war.

A Whitehall source said the embassy was being reduced from 16 to six over several days. Harold Walker, the ambassador, will stay in Baghdad with diplomats and support staff.

Britain did not rule out the possibility that EC foreign ministers might invite Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister, to meet them for talks, provided it was made clear that there was no disagreement between the EC and Washington.

An invitation to Mr Aziz is one of three options ministers are expected to discuss at an emergency meeting in Luxembourg on Friday. The others are that Jacques Pöös, the Luxembourg foreign minister, should be sent to Baghdad for talks, and that EC ambassadors in Baghdad should approach the Iraqi foreign ministry. The government did not want to prejudice the meeting and would not exclude any of these ideas. The developments suggested that while intensifying preparations for war, Britain also seems willing to pursue peace more actively.

Initial reactions to the EC initiative from Tom King, the defence secretary, on Sunday and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, on Monday suggested a

general welcome coupled with some reserve. It was assumed, however, that Britain would be against inviting Mr Aziz, because it had insisted at previous EC talks that there should be no meeting with him until he had been to Washington to see President Bush. Britain was worried that Baghdad might think it could drive a wedge between Washington and the EC.

Its willingness that such a meeting should be discussed on Friday implies an important shift which will have been discussed with Washington.

President Bush has probably concluded that the talks he proposed with Iraqi leaders will not take place because of the dispute over dates, and is willing to give the EC an opportunity to open a dialogue.

The main US-British demand would be that EC ministers should stick to the alliance's diplomatic formula if they met Mr Aziz. The ministers would insist that Baghdad comply with all United Nations resolutions on Kuwait, refuse any direct linkage with other Middle East issues, but repeat previous assurances that these matters could be discussed after Iraq had withdrawn from Kuwait.

However Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield, said the possibility of EC talks with Iraq showed there was "a lot more uneasiness with the way America is handling this crisis than perhaps we are allowed to know in Britain". He proposed that Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the UN secretary-general, should take sole charge.

Mr Benn, who has written to Señor Pérez de Cuellar, said Mr Bush seemed intent on war. "President Bush speaks for America, not for the United Nations. If this really is, as everyone is now saying, a UN matter, why is not the secretary-general responsible for negotiations and all that would flow from talks with Baghdad?" he said on Radio 4's *Today* programme.

"The plain truth is that Bush does not represent the UN. He has got quite a different agenda from the UN. To put it quite simply, there is no resolution saying President Saddam should be 'kicked up the arse'. That is not a resolution of the UN."

Meanwhile a British doctor called up for service in the Gulf said he would appeal against the draft because he has worsening asthma. Dr Andrew Rixham, a former army major, was trained in front-line medicine, which probably led to his being chosen. He said it would cost him £700 a week to pay a locum if he has to leave his practice in Ilkeston, Derbyshire.

No time, page 10

Baker may make third peace visit to the Gulf

From SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON

ANXIOUS to show that it has explored every avenue in search of a peaceful solution to the Gulf confrontation, the White House is likely to send James Baker, the Secretary of State, to the Middle East and Europe in the coming fortnight.

The visits, which administration officials expect before the January 15 deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, will allow Mr Baker to assess the cohesion of the international anti-Iraq alliance and to discuss military plans involving American-led allied forces.

Despite a visible lack of progress in breaking a deadlock over proposed high-level talks between Baghdad and Washington, a trip by Mr Baker to the Gulf would leave open the possibility of a last-minute meeting with Iraqi leaders despite American officials expressing little hope of arranging one. The State Department has released no dates for Mr Baker's trip.

Word from administration officials over the new year holiday that Mr Baker might soon undertake his third diplomatic mission to the Gulf since President Saddam Hussein's troops invaded Kuwait five months ago coincided with a flurry of diplomacy elsewhere aimed at exhausting all acceptable routes to a negotiated settlement.

The European Community's foreign ministers will gather in Luxembourg on Friday to try to find a way to avoid war, including a possible meeting between a Community representative and Tariq Aziz, Iraq's foreign minister. The EC initiative, which took shape this week, coincides with increasing concern in Washington that President Saddam might launch his own eleventh-hour diplomatic effort against the solidarity of the international anti-Iraq coalition in an attempt to avoid military action after mid-January.

Iraq has recently hinted at a willingness to compromise with the United States on setting a date for talks, while Western diplomats in Baghdad have detected growing evidence that public opposition in Iraq to a war is gathering strength. *The Washington Post* quoted a senior Iraqi official as saying his country would be ready to receive any new proposal from the United States on fixing a date for a States meeting. The official added that Baghdad had kept the door open "for whenever they want to change their position".

The Bush administration has also indicated that it is prepared for further discussions about the date, although the White House has not said whether it regards Iraq's apparent flexibility as a serious attempt to break the deadlock.

In an effort to end the stalemate, Mr Baker has abandoned a condition that Mr Bush should meet Mr Aziz in Washington before his own proposed talks with President Saddam in Baghdad.



Plea for peace: the pope, speaking in Rome on the Roman Catholic Church's World Day of Peace yesterday, urging national leaders to stop 1991 from becoming the year of war in the Middle East while, right, an Air National Guard volunteer, Robert Ramirez, returns from service in Saudi Arabia for a brief leave with his wife and two children, Robert and Crystal at Phoenix, Arizona



Power slipping from Somali leader

By ANDREW LYCETT

PRESIDENT Siad Barre's control of Somalia is so diminished and his reputation so tarnished that he is now known simply as the "mayor of Mogadishu". Yet only a decade ago he was the hope of the West in the troubled, drought-ridden Horn of Africa region.

President Barre, who is said to be 80 years old (his exact age is uncertain), hails from southern Somalia. A former policeman, he rose quickly to become army commander. In 1969 he overthrew the ineffectual civilian government headed by Mohamed Egal in a military coup.

Claiming to root out tribalism and corruption, he established a supreme revolutionary council, dedicated to "scientific socialism". With Soviet assistance, he nationalised most sectors of the Somali economy. He introduced a new Latin script designed to promote literacy and unity in the regions symbolised in the five points of the Somali star — the two former British and Italian colonies, French Somaliland or Djibouti, the Ogaden in Ethiopia and Kenya.

President Barre's claims to the Ogaden part of the star precipitated a hard-fought war between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1978.

The Soviet Union was forced to choose between him and Ethiopia, which had also adopted Soviet style communism following its revolution in 1974. It plumped for the latter. Soviet support for Ethiopia proved decisive and Somalia was forced to withdraw from the Ogaden.

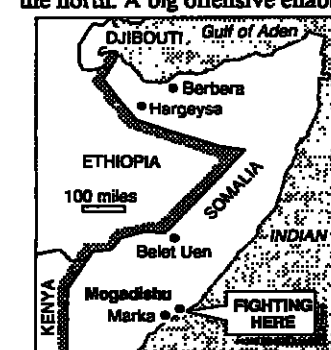
President Barre was then forced to look for new allies. He found them in the conservative Islamic countries of the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, and in the United States.

For a period in the early 1980s, President Barre was seen as a bulwark against the spread of communism in north and east Africa. Large-scale Saudi aid poured into Mogadishu. But this only heightened inherent divisions inside the country.

After claims that development assistance was being siphoned off to benefit President Barre's Marchan clan in the south, the Somali National Movement was formed in April 1981. It was composed largely of the Issak tribe from the north. In an effort to please his new allies, President Barre tried to liberalise his country's economy during the early 1980s. But the combination of drought, the influx of refugees

from Ethiopia, and economic mismanagement made it impossible. The president was forced increasingly to rely on his own Marchan clan.

As his authority diminished, the Somali National Movement carried out sporadic operations against government positions in the north. A big offensive enabled



it to capture the northern capital, Hargeisa, and the strategic port, Berbera, in May 1988. The government regained control after three months of heavy fighting. But it was now clear that the Barre regime could be challenged.

Following the inauguration of the United Somali Congress in late 1988, anti-government incursions spread to the central region

around Mogadishu. The United Somali Congress is composed largely of the Hawiye, the largest clan in Somalia, which is centred on the capital.

The Barre government was now divided about how to respond. On the one hand, it tried to offer concessions to the rebel movements which by 1989 had been joined by the Somali Patriotic Movement, operating among the Ogaden in the south. On the other, it reacted brutally against rebel incursions on its positions.

The three main rebel groups agreed to coordinate their policies militarily and politically in August. President Barre responded by calling multi-party elections for February 1991. But none of the main opposition groups responded to his offer to establish themselves as democratic parties last month. Neither did they turn up for peace talks, scheduled for Cairo in early December.

By that time the situation in the capital had deteriorated markedly. On December 4, 50 people were reported to have been killed, following what were described as "ethnic clashes". The latest round of fighting, which could prove terminal for President Barre, began on Boxing Day.

Exiled communist war hero pleads for Hanoi reform

From ASSOCIATED PRESS IN PARIS

CALLING for democratic reforms in one of a series of radio broadcasts, the Vietnamese communist war hero who accepted the surrender of Saigon in 1975 declared: "If we don't change there will be an explosion this year, because the people can't take it any more."

From his penniless exile in Paris, Colonel Bui Tin said in a BBC World Service programme that Hanoi's leadership needed to escape from narrow marxist-leninist dogma. "We must make a real opening to do away with this bureaucracy, dogmatism, conservatism," he said. "This has made such a misery among the people."

A protégé of the legendary Ho Chi Minh, Colonel Tin, aged 63, is a dedicated communist and national hero whose credentials few can rival. His stature as the man who accepted the surrender of Saigon from General Duong Van "Big" Minh gives disenfranchised Vietnamese a prominent voice.

Since late November Colonel Tin has been heard on the BBC's Vietnamese-language service each Saturday and Sunday in a series of taped interviews. He appeals for political pluralism, decentralisation of power, an end to Vietnam's global isolation and a plea for foreign investment. He

also hopes to tempt some of the two million Vietnamese who fled overseas in the past decade — some of the country's most talented people — to return home and help rebuild their country. "We must open to France, to Japan, to the United States, to have normal relations with all our old enemies," Colonel Tin said. "Our country needs real changes."

The son of a justice minister in the pre-war imperial court, Colonel Tin broke with his family and joined Ho Chi Minh's guerrilla army in 1945 to end French rule in Indochina. He impressed Ho Chi Minh while serving as his bodyguard, and was promoted rapidly. A regimental commander at the

age of 27, he took part in the Viet Minh's crushing 1954 defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu. He was active in the war against the South Vietnamese regime and its ally, the United States, as both a colonel and war correspondent for the army newspaper.

He helped supervise the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam in 1973, and rode one of the first North Vietnamese tanks to enter Saigon on April 30, 1975. The tank commander deferred to him as the ranking officer present, allowing him to accept the surrender. "I never had hatred in my heart," Colonel Tin has said. "These people did their duty, like us. Like the French, like the

Americans." Colonel Tin became a newspaper editor and retired from the army in 1982. But he grew disenchanted over the long imprisonment of former Saigon officials, the flight of the boat people, and growing corruption in the party.

The regime tinkered with economic reforms in 1986. But the party leader, Nguyen Van Linh, aged 75, issued a hard-line document in November rejecting any moves toward multiparty democracy.

From Paris the frustrated Colonel Tin issued a petition calling for immediate reforms. As a result the Hanoi secret police have since interrogated his wife and family.

SAN DIEGO NOTEBOOK by Peter Stothard

Sunshine state shrugs off blast from the Arctic

THIS was the holiday when Californian orange juice came ready-frozen on the tree and the avocado-mousse bypassed the blender. Christmas had brought the southwest of America some of the lowest temperatures since records began. New Year's day dawned over fields of green and orange mush — the sole remains of food that should have brought Vit-C to the nation's children and earned £1 billion on the supermarket shelves.

California provides half of America's fruit and vegetables. One-eighth of this year's total crop may have been destroyed in a week. But it did not seem like a disaster. The media meteorologists had not had so much excitement for years. Just as hurricanes have girls' names, so cold spells appear to be called after railway engines.

This one was the "Yukon Express". According to Rich Dittmann of Weather Data Inc, it all began when "cold air from the Arctic spilled out like heavy



syrup oozing down into the southern United States". The farmers themselves are stoic. "I didn't pick an orange," was the simple comment of one grower from Fresno, the central Californian town famous for its raisins, whose fields felt snow this year for the first time in decades. His fellows talked cautiously of "die-back rates", and "bark-split". They are not too worried where the next Mercedes is coming from.

Fruit farmers are a powerful

lobby whose leaders have never dreamed of a subsidy which California's lawmakers could not push through.

Already there is talk of "disaster relief", "emergency aid" and other expensive sounding tabs for the taxpayer. The in-tray of California's governor-elect, Pete Wilson, who takes office later this week, is filling with files on the problems of the citrus community.

All this activity comes before any mere eater of oranges feels the impact. With gas-guzzlers feeling the pain of President Saddam Hussein's oil prices, and alcohol drinkers paying the budget-imposed sin taxes, a doubling of "OJ" prices — as predicted by some analysts if the orange trees are as damaged as the fruit — would be a third deadly blow to American morale.

Here in Governor Wilson's home town of San Diego, people are looking less for agricultural handouts (oranges prefer life a little further north) than for power jobs and expense accounts

in the new administration. The outgoing governor, George Deukmejian, employed a coterie of fellow slow-talking Armenians who will now have to move out of their high offices in the state capital of Sacramento and back to their Fresno homes. At the same time, as lurid bestsellers about Saddam Hussein deride his dependence on advisers from a single home village, the burgers of San Diego are preparing to become their own new praetorian guard for a man who — as long as fashions do not change — could be bland enough for the White House in 1996.

SAN Diego's mafia has old scores to settle. The city, although the second biggest in California, has been traditionally treated by northerners as though it were part of Los Angeles or even Mexico. Sharing out the cold-weather compensation could be the first chance for San Diego's revenge.

Several communities are competing for the title of first-hit,

hardest-hit and most permanently hit by the Yukon Express. But the British film director, David Green, has claimed first sighting of snow on behalf of his neighbour in the Hollywood Hills, who, several days before Christmas, had a neatly clipped white lawn when everyone else's was pristine grass.

"How did this get here," he asked the young girl collecting the mail.

"It's my Christmas party today, so Daddy sent the ice truck," came the reply.

Another claimant for the first-snow title might be the flamboyant Beverly Wilshire hotel. The flakes were artificial — but that was no problem for the fur-clad guests who sat down at turtan tablecloths for a seasonal Scottish-style lunch, eating scotch broth from warm gourds. The real cold snap was a boon for the lady whose job it is to keep the Beverly Wilshire in the public eye. "It has to be very cold to get the electronic media here for snow," she confided.

New year revels kill 21 in Manila

Manila — Twenty-one people were killed and about 1,500 injured as the Philippines put aside economic difficulties to greet 1991 with firecrackers and gunfire.

Police said that 11 fires broke out in Manila, one of them killing three workers trapped inside a clothes factory. One man was electrocuted in another fire in the crowded Quiapo district. Thirteen people died of gunshot wounds in the midnight revelry in and around Manila. The rest of the fatalities were stabbing victims.

Filipinos seemed to have put aside their other problems as they celebrated the new year with fireworks, firecrackers and bursts of gunfire. Every year scores of people die of bullet wounds, despite appeals against the use of firearms during the New Year revelry.

Firecrackers are illegal in the Philippines, but every New Year's eve hundreds of thousands are exploded during the merrymaking, the smoke still darkening the Manila sky the next morning.

More than 1,500 people, mostly teenagers, were taken to hospital with fingers or toes blown off, or with cuts and other firecracker blast wounds. Some were treated for stab or gunshot wounds, police said.

In Manila's Sampaloc district, a doctor who was apparently annoyed by firecracker explosions outside his home fired at his neighbours, killing a youth of 18 and seriously wounding a 13-year-old girl, police said.

In another incident, a two-year-old boy was hit in the head by a bullet which pierced the roof of the family's home shortly before midnight. (Reuters)

● LISBON: New year celebrations in the Angolan capital, Luanda, left five people dead, including three children struck by stray bullets, and some 50 injured (AFP reports).

According to Portugal's LUSA news agency, many of the dead and injured were hit by bursts of machine gun fire into the air. It said that 19 of the injured were in a serious condition.

Anniversary deaths
Jerusalem — Four Palestinians were killed in the Israeli occupied territories despite tight security imposed on the 26th anniversary of the emergence of Fatah, the Palestine Liberation Organisation group. Almost the entire Gaza strip, scene of fierce clashes at the weekend, was under curfew, but violence occurred on the West Bank, where curfews were largely confined to population centres and refugee camps.

Trial urged

Kathmandu — A judicial commission has recommended that Marich Man Singh Shrestha, Nepalese prime minister from 1986 to March last year, and Lokendra Bahadur Chand, who briefly succeeded him, should stand trial for their attempts to suppress a pro-democracy movement in Nepal. The panel spent seven months investigating the bloody events that toppled the old partyless system. (Reuters)

Korean threat

Tokyo — North Korea threatened to develop its own nuclear technology when it tried to thwart the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Soviet Union and South Korea in September, according to the *Asahi Shimbun* yesterday. Soviet and Japanese governments were alarmed as they thought that North Korea, which refuses to allow international inspection, would produce its own weapons. (AFP)

Army holds fire

Colombo — The Sri Lanka government has told troops not to carry out offensive actions for 72 hours in response to the unilateral declaration of a ceasefire by the Tamil Tiger guerrillas on Monday. Only a minor violation was reported from Elephant Pass in the northern province when some members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam fired at an army camp, according to security sources. They said that there were no injuries.

Jordan reshuffle

Amman — The Jordanian prime minister, Mudar Badran, has reshuffled his cabinet, appointing a new foreign minister and bringing five members of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood into the government. A former foreign minister, Taher Masri, replaces Marwan Qassem. He is a stronger supporter for Iraq's stand in the Gulf than Mr Qassem, but no change is likely in Jordan's foreign policy, which is set by King Hussein. (Reuters)

Inflation gloom

Managua — Nicaragua ended the year with a nine per cent devaluation, slashing the value of its cordoba currency to three million to the United States dollar. The currency has been devalued by 98.4 per cent since the beginning of 1990 and near weekly devaluations have fuelled runaway inflation, estimated by some economists to total 12,000 per cent. Annual inflation figures are yet to be released. (Reuters)

Dare Major devalue?

Alan Walters

There is widespread agreement that Britain is in a recession. There is equally a consensus on the minimum programme required to prevent the recession becoming a deep depression. Lower interest rates, an increase of monetary growth, perhaps even cuts in tax rates (although that is more dubious) would, it is said, arrest the recession after six months or so. After all, interest rate cuts in 1980-81 arrested the sharp economic decline and promoted the expansion from mid-1981 that continued to almost the end of the decade.

Why cannot we repeat the feat? Every one of Nigel Lawson's teenage scribblers will know the answer. Because our monetary policy has been determined by the Bundesbank and the exchange rate speculators. Under Mr Lawson's tutelage, Britain joined the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) *de facto* in early 1987 and *de jure* in October 1990. With minor oscillations, Britain has been pegged for almost four years to a DM2.95 standard.

When Mr Lawson chose to peg the pound at around that figure in 1987, it soon became clear that the value was "too low": if the value of the pound had been determined by the free market, the pound would have risen. Interest rates were dramatically reduced to repress the buoyant exchange rate. The flood of sterling resulted in the Lawson inflation which surged, pretty much on schedule, in 1989-90.

The inflation eroded the value of sterling and decreased British competitiveness. It set in train the expectation that the DM2.95 value was untenable. The forward market is telling us that it expects a devaluation of sterling. And so funds have started to flow out of sterling in anticipation of its downward "realignment" relative to the mark. The smart money got out on the morning after ERM entry in October when, for a while, sterling rose to near the top of its permitted range. The astute anticipation of a sterling slide was entirely justified.

But in the ERM, a downward realignment is politically difficult, if not suicidal. Reputations, notably those of the CBI, financial journalists and, indeed, that of the prime minister have been put on the line. They deliberately chose to be lashed to the mast at DM2.95. They wish to convince the markets that 2.95 will be held - but for their own good reasons, the markets are discounting the pound. The only way to keep the exchange rate from sinking dangerously near its floor is to maintain, perhaps increase, interest rates on sterling deposits.

The proverbial man from Mars or even from the Fed, having read this far, will, concealing his mirth,

undoubtedly conclude that something is seriously wrong. In order to keep Britain at the *de facto* peg of DM2.95 in the boom of 1987-88, Mr Lawson added to the inflationary pressure. From the last quarter of 1988, to defend the same parity, the policy switched from prodigal ease to a severe monetary squeeze which continues unabated in the serious recession we see today.

The ERM medicine always induces a policy that is perverse. It alternates between promoting and feeding inflation, and deepening and prolonging a recession. We used to deplore the bad old policies of stop-go, but the ERM makes us step on the brakes and gun the engine more than in the exchange-control days of Selwyn Lloyd and Denis Healey.

There are not some redeeming features that compensate for the defect? The proponents of the ERM tend to play down the rollercoaster ride as either non-existent or at least as unimportant. Or alternatively, they see it as part of the price, only a transitory one and well worth paying, for Germany to take over monetary control of the United Kingdom. All Europe will eventually have, if not the Deutschmark as currency, then the German rate of inflation. There are many commentators who are willing to pay the price of a prolonged and deep slump in order to join the German hegemony. According to announcements by the Chancellor, Norman Lamont, this is also the government's policy. It would, however, lead to electoral suicide.

What alternatives are there? First there is fiscal policy; we could compensate for the regrettably high interest rates inflicted on us by the ERM with reductions in taxes and increased government spending. But fiscal effects are most uncertain, even disconcerting. There is no way in which we could offset the high interest rates required to keep us in the ERM. Second, there is the reintroduction of exchange controls. A return to such a discredited system would be a very last resort.

The government has got itself into a fine old corner. As sterling sinks nearer to its floor of DM2.82, ultimately either interest rates will have to be raised or sterling devalued - or conceivably both.

In my view, the only feasible, let alone humane, policy is to engineer a substantial devaluation of sterling. Ten per cent (to about DM2.65) might be enough to convince the world that the rate was sustainable. Such a decision by Mr Major would require great moral and political courage. He would be pilloried by the opposition, Europhiles and some of the media - and above all by his own party. An acid test for a new leader.

...and moreover

CRAIG BROWN

At the beginning of each year, the Society of Cookery Writers gathers to talk about the most successful humiliations they have inflicted on their readers over the past year.

The chairman this year was Cherry Topping, whose most recent book, *Cooking Vegetables for Five People in Spring in Northern Italy*, seems destined to prove a runaway success this spring among groups of five vegetable-eating northern Italians. "The marvellous thing about my latest book," explained Cherry, "is that all the quantities are for four people, so that the fifth and weakest member of the party will always have to go without."

"Bravo!" shouted veteran cookery writer Poppy Seed, whose latest bestseller, *Cooking for Anorexics* (Penguin, 1½ pages), appears shortly. Poppy made her name among cookery writers for pioneering the brilliant method of placing directions slightly out of order, so that eggs confidently tossed into sauces must be fished out again two lines later for their yolks to be removed.

Her first book, *Cooking with Tears*, won the Cookery Writers' golden gooseberry for its brilliant recipe for almond cake. The diligent reader, following the instructions step by step, will already have removed what he believes to be the finished cake from the oven, before turning the page to read the simple instruction, "On no account forget to put the almonds into the mixture before placing it in the oven."

The chairman then introduced the distinguished cookery writer Gordon Blurr, best known for his inspired use of the unobtainable ingredient. "Many cookery writers still believe they can flummox the reader with the addition of, say, a pinch of lovage seeds or a scattering of ratanias placed somewhere towards the end of the ingredients," he explained, "but the reader has grown wise to such simple booby-traps, keeping large stocks of lovage seeds and ratanias in his larder. However, we must not allow him to outwit us. To this end I

will now show you some slides of the very latest in unobtainable ingredients."

Gordon pressed a button, and on to the screen behind him was projected a thin, spidery object. "This, ladies and gentlemen, is a squid's eyelash. It is best placed at the end of seemingly straightforward recipes for casseroles. Just when the reader thinks he has mastered the onions, stock, stewing steak and mushrooms and allowed himself a smug of triumph over the love seeds, he will reel backwards on reading at the bottom, 'If the squid's eyelashes.' To confound him still further, I recommend the addition of the advice, in parenthesis, '(Be sure your fishmonger gives you only the left eyelashes)'."

Gordon Blurr was happy to show slides of various other unobtainable but essential ingredients - sow's earlobe steeped overnight in clarified Marsala, a sprig of watercress sculpted into a swan and infused with asafetida, and so on - before handing over to the final speaker, Roland Butler, author of *Making Do with Six Courses*, a work intended to demoralise the first-time dinner-party hostess. Roland had come armed with ideas for introductions to recipes, all of which, he assured us, would make the aspirant cook feel that bit less able to carry on.

"Never begin a recipe without first bragging to the reader of the luxurious - and preferably cosmopolitan - circumstances in which you first encountered it," he began, before giving us examples of his two personal favourites from his most recent book: "I first discovered the joy of *spiedini all'uccelletto* while snorkelling with Sir Harold Acton in the fountain of his Florentine palazzo" and "I remain forever grateful to the Duchess of Devonshire for calling my attention to this staple dish of the lower middle classes in the hills of East Cumbria - a most valuable stand-by for all fully-crowed yachting holidays in the Adriatic."

Splendid! I shall be presenting further tips from the Cookery Writers in weeks to come.

Michael Howard explains why the allies have no option but to attack, and soon

Gulf: no time for sanctions to bite

Experts in "crisis management" tell us that the longer crises last, the more options appear to be foreclosed, until at last the stark choice remains of unacceptable humiliation or war. That has happened in the Gulf.

Historians may one day dispute whether Saddam Hussein could have been persuaded to withdraw from Kuwait at an early stage, if not to abstain from invasion altogether. They may argue that some face-saving device might have been found, as in the Cuban missile crisis, at Edward Heath apparently still believes. Rather more plausible arguments are advanced, on both sides of the Atlantic, that the use of force is unnecessary since economic sanctions alone, if given time to work, may bring Saddam to his knees.

All such arguments now seem academic. Saddam's repeated refusals to withdraw from an inch of Kuwaiti territory mean that any last-minute withdrawal will involve him in a massive loss of face. On the other hand, the United Nations' insistence on such withdrawal is categorical, and to abandon it would destroy the Security Council's hard-earned credibility. America and its allies are

under no obligation to enforce the UN mandate immediately after the deadline of January 15, and perhaps they do not yet have the capacity to. But any prolonged delay will be widely interpreted as an admission of purpose - and would in fact make such enforcement steadily less likely.

Many will argue that we should not have allowed ourselves to get into such a situation. They have a point. It was certainly not necessary to deploy several hundred thousand American troops simply to deter an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia. A small rapid-deployment force would have sent the message just as effectively. With the imposition of economic sanctions, the military presence could then have been gradually stepped up, each increase conveying a further signal of intent; until after 12 months the greatly weakened Iraq, if it had not already surrendered, might have been dealt the *coup de grâce*.

Such a scenario might have looked very attractive in a war game, but it omits several important factors, not least Saddam's intransigence and skill. As it is, President Bush has found himself in an inescapable dilemma. Economic sanctions, by

general agreement, are ineffective unless backed by a credible military threat. Any military threat, to be credible, requires the deployment of substantial armed force. Yet the deployment of such a force has involved America in strains of a kind that call in question Mr Bush's ability to sustain the national will long enough to allow sanctions to take effect. The military threat must therefore be implemented before it ceases to be credible; that is, before the sanctions it is intended to support can be given the chance to work.

The sad fact is that Mr Bush is playing from a position of political weakness, as Saddam knows. The miserable procession of political failures and has-beens who have rushed to court him in Baghdad can only have deepened Saddam's contempt for the western democracies, and the evidence given at the congressional hearings in Washington must have strengthened his self-confidence. The longer the western use of force is delayed, the less credible it becomes. Protest movements have begun to spread across America and are gathering strength. The American media, unable to distinguish between impartiality and

responsibility, exploit every suggestion of poor morale among the American forces in the Gulf (who, though volunteers, are still far from being hardened professionals) and make civilian flesh creep with tales of nerve gas and body bags. In terms of economic and military strength, time may be on the side of the United Nations. It is not so in terms of political will.

Mr Bush has many admirable qualities, but the capacity to arouse and sustain American morale does not seem to be one of them. He has not so far shown himself capable of formulating a coherent and convincing rationale for the use of force in the Gulf and communicating it to the American people. It is a failure of communication made all the more serious by the erosion of his clumsy status brought about by his clumsy handling of the recent budgetary crisis and by the current disarray within the Republican party.

His chances of holding the American people together over a period of months, if not years, patiently awaiting the effect of economic sanctions, are negligible. The stronger the arguments advanced in favour of delay, the less can he afford to accept them.

Barring a complete surrender on the part of Saddam, war in the Gulf thus now does seem inevitable, and indeed imminent. And though we may regret the political weakness that dictates its timing, nothing has happened during the past five months to suggest that it is not necessary. To compare Saddam with Hitler is to trivialise Hitler and elevate Saddam. But it was not Hitler who first challenged the authority of the League of Nations by forcibly annexing a small and peaceful state. It was Mussolini; and his attack on Abyssinia in 1935 provides a far more appropriate analogy.

The reasons then advanced for accepting that *fait accompli* now seem very familiar. War was unacceptable to the electorate. It would wreck our convalescent economy. Mussolini had after all a very reasonable case, Abyssinia was an undemocratic feudal state and not worth saving anyway. So we failed that test. In consequence we had to face others far more terrifying. We do not have to make the same mistake again.

Sir Michael Howard is Robert E. Lovett Professor of Modern History at Yale University.

Wasting our barren assets

Should we colonise Mars? For those who enjoy a fresh topic to chew over, that is the question of the hour. True, they are not yet discussing it in saloon bars, in barber shops or on radio phone-ins, but it can only be a matter of time.

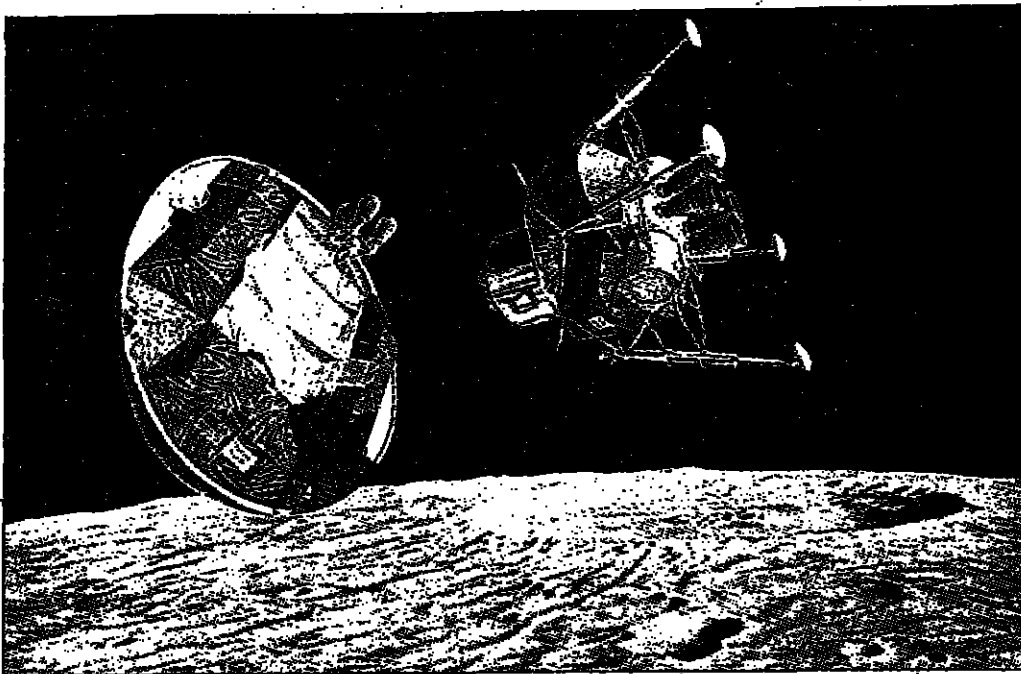
More important, the argument bears directly on a similar one about the future of the Earth's last undeveloped continent, Antarctica. A growing chorus demands that Antarctica be declared a world reserve, protected from mining - or even prospecting - for all time. For environmentalists this has become an article of faith, which suggests it may be time to take a good look at it. But first to Mars.

According to some space scientists, the possibility exists of turning Mars into a habitable planet by human intervention. Apart from our own, Mars is the planet in our solar system least hostile to life, but it does have drawbacks. The temperature is so low that any would-be colonist would be freeze-dried soon after taking off his space suit. The atmosphere is thin and consists mainly of carbon dioxide.

To start with, therefore, Mars would have to be warmed up. A greenhouse effect could be created by pumping into the Martian atmosphere millions of tonnes of gases such as the despised CFCs, the aerosol propellants now being phased out on Earth. Given enough time, this would warm the planet from -60°C to a temperature above freezing point. Any ice there may be in the Martian crust would melt, providing the water without which life cannot exist. At the same time, the warming would release frozen gases, thickening the atmosphere.

The next step would be to colonise Mars with bacteria or other simple organisms that live on carbon dioxide. In time, they would produce enough oxygen to create a breathable atmosphere, though even before that it might be possible for pioneers to walk about on the Martian tundra in ordinary clothes, carrying an oxygen bottle and taking occasional whiffs.

Even the optimists believe that it could take a century or two to make the place comfortable. Pessimists argue that the idea makes a fine basis for a science fiction story, (where, indeed, it first appeared, as did so many other technical innovations, starting



Shape of things to come: the exploitation of outer and inner space raises ethical questions

Nigel Hawkes, science editor, sees no environmental objection to the human colonisation of Mars or permitting controlled exploitation of Antarctica

with Jules Verne's submarine) but is full of questionable assumptions and probably would not work in practice. Environmentalists, as is their wont, declare the whole idea morally wrong.

They take it as axiomatic that whatever is, ought to be. Mars is a frozen, lifeless planet, so that is the way it is intended to be. By the same token, Antarctica is a wilderness of ice and snow, so any suggestion that it might be improved or put to man's use is rejected in moralistic terms.

Eugene Hargrove, a philosopher at the University of North Texas and editor of a book called *Spaceship Earth: Environmental Ethics in the Solar System*, actually opposes re-engineering Mars on the grounds that nobody should undertake any project that exceeds the life of those who start it. Has he never heard of planting trees? The beauty of our landscape has depended on farsighted people working for posterity, making improvements which they could not hope to enjoy to the full

themselves. So that argument is a particularly feeble one for an environmentalist to use.

In the current issue of *Scientific American*, two enthusiasts for the "terraforming" of Mars, Christopher McKay of NASA's Ames Research Centre, and Robert Haynes of York University, Toronto, confront the arguments. "Does Mars have rights?" they ask. "What would be the greater good, Mars barren, or Mars endowed with life? It is illogical to argue that a dead planet ought to remain as it is, simply because it is."

Many of the same arguments apply to Antarctica, now the subject of vigorous international debate. At a recent meeting of the Antarctic Treaty nations in Vina del Mar in Chile, the overwhelming view was in favour of an outright ban on the exploitation of any minerals that Antarctica may contain. Even the British government, once a tough defender of the need for a convention governing mineral exploitation, has been forced to shift its ground. The

environmental ethic of absolute purity seems set to rule when the conference resumes in Spain in April.

This position is not based on logic, but on a conviction that the ethical rights traditionally owed to individuals must now be extended to animals, insects, ecosystems, and even inanimate objects such as rocks, ice-fields, glaciers, or barren planets. Nobody wishes to see the biological diversity of the Earth heedlessly diminished, but it is worth asking if every insect must be valued highly when so many of the world's people remain in desperate need of economic development.

Environmentalists cannot claim that Antarctica would be preserved in its pristine condition for people to go and marvel at, for mass tourism would be at least as destructive as mineral exploitation. It will be preserved, rather, as an ideal of perfection in people's heads, like a work of art once glimpsed and then locked away in a cellar.

This sentimental attitude to nature would have horrified the vigorous makers of our world in the 19th century. W.E. Gladstone relaxed by chopping down trees; "Whole forests perished in order that the prime minister might perspire," as Randolph Churchill remarked. In those days, nature was an enemy to be conquered, not a god to be appeased. Attitudes have changed, but most of what environmentalists now seek to preserve in nature was in reality the work of man.

The idea that all change to the natural environment is despoliation is therefore unhistorical, and untrue. If benefit can be won from the exploitation of Antarctica, scrupulously controlled, it is not morally wrong to seek it. Nor would it be wrong, so long as we are convinced that Mars has no life of its own, to attempt to install our own there. Such a project, if further studies prove it to be feasible, would be an exciting challenge. The fainthearts should not be allowed to win the argument.

A voyage round the facts

Writing as he did for the middlebrow masses, Beverly Nichols could be excused the journalistic licence, the occasional tiny exaggeration, the contrived coincidence, that he employed to make a point. Never before though, has anyone seriously challenged his claim that on three separate occasions he tried to kill his alcoholic father. Now his close friend Bryan Connon, whom Nichols asked before his death in 1983 to write his life story, is doing just that.

Nichols made the claim in *Father Figure*, published in 1972. Apart from being an alcoholic, he wrote, John Nichols, a Bristol solicitor, sadistically ill-treated his wife and contemptuously stifled the young Beverly's ambition to become a professional pianist.

According to the book, Beverly twice tried to kill him with sleeping pills and once with a garden roller, as John Nichols lay prostrate on the lawn. The first attempt was made when Beverly was a schoolboy, the last when he was 31. All failed, and John Nichols lived on until dying from natural causes at the age of 85.

After the book came out, an MP demanded that Nichols be charged with attempted murder. The Home Office considered the possibility but, on the recommendation of Scotland Yard, it was rejected.

Connon, whose own book will be published by Constable in March, said yesterday: "When I

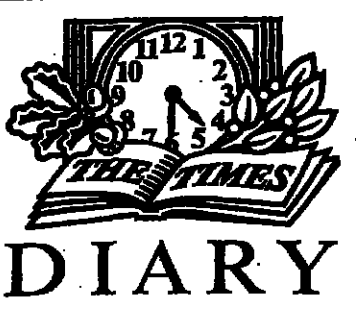
challenged Beverly about the murder attempts he smiled and said, 'Readers will have to make up their own minds if I was telling the truth.' I don't think he was. He revelled in the publicity."

Connon points to conflicting entries in Nichols' diaries. "On one day he writes that there was no money for him or his mother to buy clothes, but plenty for his father's drink. A few days later he writes excitedly about how he was waiting for delivery of a new cape from a London store. It just doesn't add up."

Connon's book paints an unflattering picture of the man described by Osbert Sitwell as "the first of the bright young people". Nichols, best remembered for books such as *Down the Garden Path*, reflecting his love of gardening, and a torrent of words about cats, was difficult and unpredictable, according to Connon. "I have told the truth. Many of his fans may not like it, though I think he would."

Unpretty poly When thinking environmentally, don't think green but black. That is the message sent to leavers at Napier Polytechnic in Edinburgh, by a working party that monitored standards at the blackboard.

"The first item on the agenda," says its report, "is the blackboard environment, initially concentrating on the blackboard duster. The blackboard duster should be placed in one of the compartments of the box at the side of the blackboard. If placed there immediately after use this im-



proves the cleanliness of the blackboard environment considerably.

The authors of the report fear that their admonitions, like other action plans for the environment, will not be adopted immediately. "It will take this idea some time to percolate through all members of staff," they say.

American satirists are having a tough time coming up with scenarios more absurd than the reality of life in New York. Children in the city's primary schools are being taught to throw themselves to the ground at a loud sound. Why? For when they go out into a world full of maniacs with machinaguns. Those who do it well are rewarded with a lollipop.

Sneakers out

Radically different though Britain's jails are likely to be after the Woolf report, they will not - to the chagrin of penal reformers - be run by prison officers wearing unimpeachable casual dress. When Lord Justice Woolf, the

Appeal Court judge, began his government-commissioned enquiry into the penal system in England and Wales, he thought the regulation navy blue uniforms were too militaristic and did little to promote friendly, constructive relations between officers and prisoners.

He has now been persuaded that opting for the more casual kind of dress favoured by Dutch warden would not work in Britain. It could be a "bridge too far" for the Prison Officers' Association, already nervous about the scale of the changes that are likely to follow the report, due to be published in March.

"He has reached the view that some, arguably desirable reforms may have to be sacrificed for the sake of broader, more fundamental ones," says one source close to the enquiry.

Scoring a duck

In a quest worthy of the fictional Indiana Jones, American explorer Rory Nugent has been searching for one of the world's rarest birds, the pink-headed duck. On the strength of a rumour that the bird, last positively sighted in 1935 and believed by naturalists to be extinct, had been spotted in a remote marshland in north-east India, he set off in pursuit. After searching in vain through the Calcutta fowl markets he decided to seek the duck along the Brahmaputra river, only to discover that for security reasons, a permit was needed. In the three months that elapsed before it was issued, Nugent

wandered the Himalayas, tracking what he thought was a yeti in Sikkim and encountering plotters against the Tibetan government. Eventually he set off with an Indian companion in a 12ft skiff, paddling from the Burmese border to Bangladesh.

After such tribulations, the story should end with Nugent returning home in triumph with hours of video film of the elusive bird, hailed by the massed ranks of American ornithologists. Alas, of the thousands of ducks he saw, not one had a pink head. "It remains an enigma," says Nugent, sadly.



Dame Joan Sutherland's final curtain call at Covent Garden on New Year's Eve has reduced still further the already depleted ranks of diva dames on the operatic stage. Only two now remain: Gwyneth Jones and Kiri te Kanawa. Perhaps the opera-loving John Major, who attended the swansong production of Die Fledermaus and whose wife Norma wrote a biography of Sutherland, should seek suggestions for his first honours list.



BROOKE'S PATIENT POLICY

Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, wishes to be left in peace. In an interview yesterday, in which he stressed his desire to move towards political devolution in the province, he emphasised that progress is easier when Northern Ireland and its problems are not in the limelight.

Quietude suits the minister. The chief characteristic for any successful Northern Ireland secretary is the patience of a saint and the manners of an angel, and Mr Brooke has won praise from all sides for his willingness to listen. Avoiding any temptation to go for the gimmick or quick fix, he has followed the tactics of pulling the ends towards the middle inch by inch, but never so hard as to tear the delicate fabric of a compromise in the making.

The first priority of his office, more difficult than it sounds, is to prevent things becoming worse. The second is to create a climate in which the various factions can do business with each other. Quietly and without drama, progress was made in 1990 under both headings. The streets are now rarely disturbed by the communal violence which was such a dangerous feature of the 1970s. The indirect counterattack on terrorism through the interruption of funds, both from within the community and internationally, is beginning to work.

Though unemployment in Northern Ireland is still higher than in Britain, its economy seems to be proving less vulnerable to recession than the rest of the United Kingdom. It owes its relative buoyancy partly to outside investment — over £80 million through the international development fund over the past five years. In the schools children from both communities are at last being taught each other's history, and the government has put its weight behind the encouragement of inter-denominational education.

At work, laws against discrimination are beginning to bite. Roman Catholics are now reaching senior positions in the civil service on merit. Cooperation is growing across the

communal divide in numerous local authorities and politicians are gradually learning the habit of talking to their opposite numbers privately. Both the Irish Republic, under the presidency of Mary Robinson, and the Roman Catholic Church, under the primacy of Dr Cahal Daly, have recently taken on a more hopeful appearance. Community leaders are engaged in a series of conversations with Mr Brooke about the future shape of the Northern Ireland administration itself.

Mr Brooke serves under a prime minister with few preconceived ideas. John Major owes little to the Unionists or their English allies on his backbenches. He wisely kept Mr Brooke at the Northern Ireland Office. He would be wiser still to give Mr Brooke a licence to move policy along as he thinks best in the coming year.

The spectrum of options available to Britain stretches from a solution imposed on Northern Ireland against the wishes of its inhabitants at one end, to benign neglect at the other. So far Mr Brooke has steered closer to the latter than the former. His immediate policy objective is the modest one of a constitutional conference, with devolution and an "Irish dimension" heading the agenda, but without the British government suggesting its own solutions to either.

Some time in 1991 he may have the opportunity to fulfill the long-held expectations of a "Brooke initiative". Ideally, that would mean agreement between all sides on the terms of reference of such a conference. Less ideally, if he judges the outstanding differences might not be real sticking points, he would be right to make public a statement of what Britain sees as the most widely acceptable basis for such a conference, as an arbitration between the conflicting interests.

Mr Brooke may prefer not to make that intervention now. His invitation to the politicians of Northern Ireland to sit round the table stands, and it is one that they would be foolish to decline for very much longer.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Those whose return to work involves a road journey from south to north London will start the New Year badly. Today, Waterloo bridge is closed for a week of repairs after many months in which works have reduced its capacity. Traffic snarl-ups seem inevitable.

Assume the repairs to be (as the authorities claim) urgent. Why could they not have been done on any of the past 11 days when the bridge has been deserted? One answer is that to manage the traffic over Christmas, the police would have needed more officers on expensive overtime. They, like the authorities and the contractors, want the job done as cheaply as it can be. The costs of doing the repair at peak times, though horrendous, fall on the commuters. The savings from doing them at peak times, though modest, fall on the public purse. Hence the works begin on January 2.

This highlights an extraordinary contradiction in national roads policy. When the building of new roads is being considered, nothing is more important than the benefits to the travelling public. The bulk of the benefits assessed take the form of time savings to road users. The new road is justified because it gets people and goods from A to B quicker. If time savings were ignored, only a few by-passes, justified on environmental grounds, would be built.

However, for repairs, no such procedures exist. The fuming motorist, queuing for the convenience of gas boards, traffic engineers and assorted diggers and fillers of holes, is helpless and unconsidered.

The government makes a show of tackling the problem. Roadworks, it says, are being programmed to avoid peak traffic periods. Contraflow layouts on motorways are being improved; video monitoring helps prompt

response to traffic incidents at roadworks, and mobile lane closures are being introduced for some works. But by their fruits shall you know them. The only change noticeable to the general public is the notice at the end of the worst blockages apologising for any delay.

The incompetence of the transport department, and of contractors, in making sure that roads are built properly to start with was criticised in a report by the Public Accounts Committee of MPs last year. Ministers, insensitive to the consumer of services, simply rejected the censure.

Old, badly built roads must now be repaired in the most convenient possible way. Financial sticks and carrots are needed. The government has already introduced a system of lane rental for some motorway works. This gives contractors an incentive to pick up the cones marking off closed lanes when they are not actually working on them. The work is being completed faster, and motorists are less inconvenienced.

The principle needs to be extended. Malcolm Rifkind, the new transport secretary, should be taken on a compulsory visit to a country where they do these things properly. In France, the motorways are privately owned. If they are closed no tolls can be collected. So when they require repair, there is none of the half-a-dozen men standing round a steamroller familiar to the British motorist. Convoys of tarmac layers attended by battalions of *ouvriers* under stop-watch touting supervisors get the job done, so the tolls roll in once more as fast as possible. Toll roads, for geographical reasons, do not suit Britain. But a pricing system that rewarded contractors for minimising congestion would suit the British commuter very well indeed.

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THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING

Rail fares will go up next Monday — again. The dreary familiarity of such unwelcome news breeds an unconscious assumption that the real cost of most staple items has risen steadily over the years. Not so: as some prices have risen in real terms, so by definition, others have fallen. According to an *Economist* survey, the cost of a second-class return rail fare to Glasgow is somewhat less than it was in 1900, and only just over a third of the price in 1930. Every price is a palimpsest, the complex product of an historical evolution no less fascinating for the social historian than for the economist.

Technology, competition, the labour market, the state and other factors enter into the equation. Prices may mask changes for the worse: though fares are relatively cheaper than before, rail passengers grumble ever more loudly about comfort and reliability. Or changes for the better: the price of the dearest Jaguar car has quadrupled in real terms since 1930, but the present vehicle's performance is far superior.

As for *The Times*, the cover price is in real terms almost exactly the same today as it was in 1900. Few readers will be old enough personally to compare the quality of the paper now with then, though the quantity of editorial matter contained in the average issue has certainly grown hugely.

expensive: while the demand increases, the supply is limited. Hence the investor who buys a Georgian house is banking on the fact that the stock of old properties is static. As more people come to afford them, their scarcity value, snob appeal and price will grow.

Another article in the same issue, however, shows how risky investment in the art market has been over the last three centuries when compared, say, to gilts. Even positional goods may undergo big fluctuations in price which, though never permanent, are enduring enough to scupper all but the most long-term investors. Property prices and rents in 15th-century Venice must have been among the highest in Europe. Yet three centuries later Byron thought nothing of renting a palazzo there. Nor did Wagner 60 years later, though neither man was particularly wealthy. Today only the super-rich can live on the Grand Canal — among them, perhaps, a handful of writers or musicians, two professions whose earning potential has improved vastly since Byron's day.

Relative prices have varied more than ever before in this, the most inflationary century in history. Such prodigious inflation does, perhaps, put a premium on avarice. "Without money, you're one day old and one inch tall," says Martin Amis's anti-hero John Self in *Money*, a novel rightly hailed as a parable of the decade which has just ended. But 600 years ago Geoffrey Chaucer knew all about Self's materialism: "And lightly as it cometh, so wol we spende." The prices people pay for their pleasures reveal more about their souls than they might wish. In the over-eager pursuit of all that is rare and costly, it is easy to overlook the priceless.

Performance key to pay awards

From the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry
Sir, The CBI's economic priority for 1991 is to see inflation squeezed out of our economy, and we are not looking for the realignment of sterling within the exchange-rate mechanism — a euphemism for devaluation — as a means of compensating for wage settlements that cannot be justified by performance.

But the government must play its part in winning the battle against inflation. Performance must be the key determinant of pay awards in the public service. Further inflationary own goals simply must be avoided, as must automatic indexation of taxes and benefits, particularly if the index is both of doubtful relevance and out of line with practice elsewhere in the EC.

Nevertheless, *The Times* carried two reports on December 27, on statutory sick pay and on university funding, suggesting that there are parts of Whitehall which the counter-inflationary imperative has not yet reached. Specifically, you reported that the Department of Social Security will continue to promote a bill that "makes a modest shift in the balance of provision for short-term sickness between the state and business".

The "modest shift" would amount to some £100 million a year in the short term, equivalent to around 25 per cent of the Department of Trade and Industry's support for innovation and around one-third of the amount industry contributed last year towards the cost of higher education.

You also reported that the universities derived "only" 6.3 per cent of their income from industry in 1987-8, with much of the balance coming from government sources. But governments have no funds. Only the power to tax.

In the last financial year, the taxes on business — national insurance contributions and corporation tax — amounted to £53 billion, or £2,400 for every household in the country, and money spent paying the taxman cannot be spent on the investment needed to tackle the underlying causes of inflation, which is our number one priority.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BANHAM,
Director-General,
Confederation of British Industry,
Centre Point,
103 New Oxford Street, WC1.
December 28.

Stress compensation

From Mr Nicholas Angel
Sir, It was with astonishment that I read today (December 19) that four firemen were compensated over £30,000 for "psychological stress" as a result of the King's Cross fire.

Do not firemen, and others in the emergency services, expect to experience such stress as this? Is it not a part of their job? Do those who dare to call out the fire brigade run the risk of having to compensate firemen for the stress resulting from such things as a blazing house? Moreover, where does one draw the line between stress worth £34,000 and stress worth nothing?

No doubt this case will lead to a trend of similar claims and court actions, undermining the whole role of the emergency services.

Yours faithfully,
N. ANGEL,
26 The Grove,
Radlett, Hertfordshire.

Full circle

From Mrs J. M. Browne
Sir, Fifteen months after my husband died in September 1989 my sister-in-law telephoned me earlier in December to say that a gold signet ring, possibly his, had just come to light.

He had lost his in 1953 in the garden of our former home. I had given it to him when we were engaged in May 1946. It was of Victorian red gold and cost about £30, which was quite a lot then.

We dug over the vegetable patch searching for it without success, but the latest occupant of our former house telephoned my sister-in-law, whose address was supplied by a neighbour, to say she had found it in an old stone trough containing bulbs.

The house had been sold five times since we left. Don't you think it is a charming story of honesty and kindness?

Yours sincerely,
JOSEPHINE M. BROWNE,
20 High Street,
Amble, Northumberland.

Legal aid work

From Mr Stanley Best
Sir, I would like to take issue with your leading article "Access to justice" (December 13) in at least three respects.

First, the notion that the magistrate's courts provide "far better value for money" than jury trial in crown courts overlooks the better standard of justice available in crown courts as a shield against wrongful conviction.

Secondly, if the prosecution was made to pay defence costs in respect of every acquittal or successful appeal from conviction the drain on the legal aid fund would be dramatically arrested and we would then see the true cost of legal aid in criminal courts.

Finally, as to civil actions, legal aid offers to a litigant, at best, the minimum needed to bring or defend an action, often against wealthy opponents or those backed by insurance or central and local

Never on Sunday for some sales

From Mr Alan Cash

Sir, A. J. Edwards (December 22) takes the prime minister to task for describing the Sunday trading restrictions as unsatisfactory. Because they are absent from the fifth schedule to the Shops Act 1950 the following are just some of the items that must not be sold on Sundays:

Phonecards, batteries (except those for cars and cycles), sponges and dusters (other than those designed for washing and polishing cars), household matches (smokers' matches are permitted), greetings cards ("get well" cards are okay), fried fish and chips from a fish and chip shop (allowed from any other takeaway food shop), packs and boxes of tissues (unless required for someone with a cold), golf clubs (other than from a golf course/driving range) and toilet rolls (unless required for an illness).

Car wash machines must be turned off for the duration of Sunday, garden centres must refrain from selling anything not living and car-hire outlets stand to be prosecuted for accepting the return of a car. Furthermore, petrol-filling stations are not allowed to give away drinking glasses with petrol (the former cost as part of the purchase), nor can they redeem gift-coupons.

I believe the prime minister is perfectly correct to call the Sunday trading restrictions "bizarre". Logically, this leads me to conclude that Mr Edwards is talking through his hat (which must not be sold on a Sunday).

Yours faithfully,
ALAN CASH,
72 Squirrels Heath Lane,
Hornchurch, Essex.

From Mr Andrew McClintock
Sir, Mr Edwards deplores the flouting of legal restrictions on Sunday opening (a view which I share), but raises a wider point.

You published on December 10 details of several ancient and un-

enforced laws ("an offence not to attend church over Christmas", Act of Uniformity, 1551); the statute book must be full of unrepealed laws of that sort.

Between modern laws, respected and enforced, and ancient laws, unknown and ignored, there must be a limbo of laws that are on their way to desuetude.

If there is no clamour to enforce these, and if the authorities take the view that their resources are better put to the enforcement of other laws, then the citizen and the authorities have in fact decided to ignore what none the less remains "the law". Both have, with justification, decided what laws they heed.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW MCCLINTOCK,
Clarendon House,
19 Cavendish Road,
Brincliffe, Sheffield,
South Yorkshire,
December 25.

From Mr Bob Clough-Parker
Sir, Those clamouring for Sunday trading overlook an important financial fact of life: it would merely spread six days' trading across seven days. The customer's purse or pocket is not bottomless and the extra costs to the businesses would increase prices and fuel the fire of inflation.

Yours faithfully,
BOB CLOUGH-PARKER
(General Secretary),
Chester & District
Chamber of Trade,
PO Box 235, Chester, Cheshire,
December 24.

From Mr Peter D. New
Sir, Political and religious consideration apart, it is rather nice to have one day which is different from the rest of the week.

Yours faithfully,
PETER D. NEW,
59 Gravelly Hill North,
Erdington, Birmingham.

Dependence on oil

From Mr James M. S. Ullman

Sir, During this season of reevaluation and introspection, it is difficult to understand how the governments of presumably rational and civilized nations will strive so hard, even militarily, to preserve our supply of oil from the Mideast, while making virtually no effort to re-orient our lifestyles to decrease dependence on that tenuous source.

Principal among those policies ought to be an all-out commitment to mass transit, particularly rail, to take traffic off motorways, or, as we call them here in America, "Interstates".

Contrary to what transportation planners here have taught for decades, highway expansion does not alleviate traffic congestion, it creates it. Studies also show that a one-track main line railway, properly signalled, allowing bi-directional operation, has the capacity equivalent to a ten-lane highway.

Here in the United States, Am-

trak, the counterpart of British Rail, has had to struggle against the opposition of both the Reagan and Bush administrations both for funding and public support, but has done a remarkable job of reintroducing the American people to the pleasures of a passenger train, which had been given a premature funeral in the late 1960s.

Indeed, the potential for expansion of rail service throughout the world is not only inspired by the Chunnel project but also by the fact that, even in America, where trains were relegated to museums, a comeback of astounding proportions is under way.

Let us hope that in this new decade passenger trains continue to expand and improve as we need them, more now than ever.

Very truly yours,
JAMES M. S. ULLMAN
(Acting Chairman, Connecticut Association of Rail and Bus Users),
95 East Main Street, Meriden,
Connecticut 06450-891, USA,
December 26.

Lotteries dilemma

From Mr Frank Flannery

Sir, Mr R. A. Cummins (December 27) assumes that the presence of legalised gambling in Britain will inhibit the development of lotteries. If the recent experience of two of Britain's neighbours, France and the Republic of Ireland, is anything to go by he may have got it wrong.

The citizens of both of these countries have access to the full range of gambling opportunities, yet the lotteries introduced there have been an enormous success and have left the traditional forms of gambling (horses, dogs, etc.) quite unaffected.

The real point, of course, is that lotteries are not really a form of gambling in the normally accepted sense of that word, since their fundraising nature makes them unattractive to the "serious gambler". They tend to be enjoyed by that much wider population whose "gambling" in this country would be

confined to a once a year flutter on the Grand National or a visit to the local bingo hall. Indeed, the universal popularity of lotteries owes much to their non-addictive, non-gambling characteristics which allow for mass enjoyment and substantial fundraising without significant social risk.

Britain will soon have its first real experience of the phenomenon of modern lotteries when "The Lottery Ticket" is launched in aid of up to 200 charities and societies in London in the early spring. This should mark the beginning of the end for the artificial monopoly which the football pools have had on this industry for so long, and the beginning of a great new opportunity for charities, arts and sporting societies who have been excluded.

Yours sincerely,
FRANK FLANNERY
(Managing Director),
UK Charity Lotteries Ltd.,
Portland House, Stag Place, SW1.
December 28.

In the wrong outfit

From Mr P. J. K. Tither

Sir, Mr Christopher Walker's misunderstanding over the protective suits issued to the armed forces, so ably solved by Mr Rhodes (December 18), would have been avoided had not the Defence Council acted with more regard for semantics than common sense.

The drill for atomic, biological and chemical defence was originally

as simple as ABCD. When the atomic bomb was succeeded by other types of nuclear bombs (much the same sort of thing in anyone's book), some pedant changed the drill to "nuclear, biological and chemical defence" resulting in the highly forgettable "NBCD".

Yours faithfully,
P. J. K. TITHER,
The Old Bakery,
Heol y Bont,
Cydweli, Dyfed,
December 22.

Tax on new cars

From Mr Charles Carr

Sir, For sheer effrontery, the plea by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders for the abolition of the 10 per cent tax on new cars (report, December 28) takes some beating.

For months ministers have been making themselves hoarse warning that excessive wage awards would lead to job losses. Unwilling to risk strikes, the car makers have been in the forefront of union appeasement. It ill behoves them now to ask the Government to foot the bill for their failure.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES CARR,
Brookhurst, The Grange,
St Pierre Port, Guernsey, CI,
December 30.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Starting the year back to front

From Mr J. P. Chambers

Sir, In ten years' time, on January 2, 2001, most people in this country will probably write the date as 02-01(month)-01, and in North America as 01(month)-02-01. Those following the International Standard of year-month-day will write 01-01-02. From 2001 until 2013, every date in the first 12 days of a month can be interpreted in each of these three different ways.

We could avoid this confusion by more rapidly adopting the International Standard which, until the year 2000, is distinguishable by the leading year digits in the nineties.

Yours faithfully,
J. P. CHAMBERS,
24 Green Lane,
Tadworth, Surrey,
90-12-27.

Flaws of Trident

From Air Commodore Alastair Mackie

Sir, So far from blighting opposition to Trident (your leading article, December 21), Saddam and the new uncertainty in the Soviet Union seem certain to enhance it. Saddam because his action has yet again demonstrated the uselessness of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to aggression: Soviet political turmoil for a subtler but no less telling reason.

Soviet would-be democrats and hard-liners alike feel that their country is, as always, under threat. The only change, as they perceive it, is that internal dissipation has replaced external aggression as the source. The certain way to make whatever leadership emerges even jumpier, and the prospects for security even more remote, is to go on pointing nuclear weapons at the Soviet Union.

Nobody has described the vanishing point which the Soviet nuclear counter-threat has reached more vividly than Admiral Sir James Eberle, writing in *The Guardian* last March:

It is ludicrous to imagine the Soviet generals and admirals sitting down in Moscow to consider these awesome problems and saying "Here's a good idea, why don't we launch an attack on Western Europe?"

Trident has become as flawed strategically as it appears to be technically.

Yours faithfully,
A. MACKIE (Vice-President),
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament,
162 Holloway Road, N7,
December 21.

Wartime memorial

From Mr W. M. Graham

Sir, Recently, thanks to the restoration work done by English Heritage to the underground wartime headquarters of Vice-Admiral, Dover, my wife was able to take me to see the place where she worked as a "Wren" in the 1939-45 war.

Whilst I was most impressed with all that I saw of this remarkable engineering feat of tunnelling, my wife was at a loss to point out to me the operations room in which Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay planned and directed the evacuation of the British and Allied armies from Dunkirk. Furthermore, she could see no trace of the signal distribution office in which she worked, which was adjacent, for the simple reason that they had both earlier been demolished by the Ministry of Defence.

Bearing in mind the historical importance of "Operation Dynamo" and the fact that it should be remembered in perpetuity, would it not be possible to reconstruct the operations room as it was at the time of "the nine days wonder"? There must be a number of retired naval personnel alive who would be able to give advice on the dug-out.

I suggest that, rather like the government underground headquarters in Whitehall, the Dynamo room would make a fitting climax to a fascinating visit for future generations.

Yours sincerely,
MARCUS GRAHAM,
Doctors Commons,
The Market Place,
Northleach, Gloucestershire,
December 22.

Give a dog . . .

From the Reverend John Ticehurst
Sir, Our English surnames are odd. We go in a lot for birds and beasts, but only the more unlikely ones.

Come to think of it Bird is not uncommon, but I have never known a Mr Beast. We have in the West Country a Mrs Hens and a Mrs Cock and a Mr Robin. Other bird names include Chick and Eagle and Heron, Ruff and Dove and Buzzard, Pheasant, Partridge and Goosey, Woodcock, Duck and Drake, Jay, Lark and Swan, Swift, Martin and Swallow, Crow, Kite, Bunting, Sheldrake and Thrush, Quail and Teal. All in all the birds do pretty well.

When it comes to the beasts, we have a Mr Squirrel and a Mrs Snail, Hogg, Badger and Stoat, Beaver, Goate, Lamb, Pig and Otter, Mole and Ratney, Doe and Hart, Fox and Hare, Seal and Herring and Codd. There is a Mrs Bull and a Mr Cow — but why no names from the most common animals from the past, cat and dog and horse? Or do they appear in other parts of the country?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TICEHURST,
The Manse, Exeter Road,
Braunton, North Devon.

SOCIAL NEWS

Forthcoming marriages

Mr L.B. Balfour and Miss E.E. Baker
The engagement is announced between Bruce, son of Mr and Mrs Oliver Balfour, of Edinburgh, and Helen, daughter of Mr and Mrs Keith Baker, of Clifton, Avon.

Mr R.M. Bell and Miss D.C. Doling
The engagement is announced between Richard, son of Mr and Mrs John Bell, of Bridlington, Yorkshire, and Deborah Christine, daughter of Mr and Mrs Derek Doling, of Ealing, London.

Major D.R.L. Bone and Miss K.M.R. Mulliner
The engagement is announced between Major David Bone, 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, son of the late Major J.E. Bone and of Mrs R.H. Boyle, and Mary Rose, daughter of Dr and Mrs G.N. Mulliner.

Dr M.A. Brown and Miss K.J. Waugh
The engagement is announced between Murray Arthur, elder son of Dr and Mrs Norman Brown, Port Stewart, Northern Ireland, and Kirsty Jane, younger daughter of Dr and Mrs W. Norman Waugh, North Berwick, East Lothian, Scotland.

Dr A.R.H. Corfield and Miss J.R. Lawrence
The engagement is announced between Alastair, elder son of Dr and Mrs Ian Corfield, of West Park, Leeds, and Joanna, daughter of Mr and Mrs Malcolm Lawrence, of Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

Mr S.A. Crew and Miss A.J. Clark
The engagement is announced between Simon Andrew, son of Mr and Mrs A.C. Crew, of Petersfield, Hampshire, and Alison Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs D.L. Clark, also of Petersfield, Hampshire.

Mr T.J. Farrell and Miss K.A. Rowden
The engagement is announced between Thomas, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Farrell, of Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, and Keryll, daughter of Mr and Mrs W.R. Rowden, of Houston, Texas. The marriage will take place in the United States.

Mr G.M.E. Hollingbery and Miss J.M. White
The engagement is announced between George Michael Edward, elder son of Mr and Mrs Michael Hollingbery, of Bishop Burton, East Yorkshire, and Janelle Marie, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Ronald White, of Key Biscayne, Florida, USA.

Mr R.P. Judge and Miss L.C. Todd
The engagement is announced between Rupert Peter, elder son of Mr Peter Judge, of Charsfield, and Mrs Hazel Judge, of Wickham Market, Suffolk, and Louise Claire, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Todd, of Orley, Suffolk.

Mr A.J. Mack and Miss B.J. Snape
The engagement is announced between Andrew John, son of Mr and Mrs D.J. Mack, of West Wickham, Kent, and Belinda Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs M.J. Snape, of Tixall, Staffordshire.

Mr R.J.J. Stokes-Rhys and Miss P.S. Taylor
The engagement is announced between Rhodri, son of Captain and Mrs M. R. Stokes-Rhys, of Bayswater, London, and Braemore, Ross-shire, and Philippa, daughter of Mr and Mrs M.J. Taylor, of The Old Parsonage, Aust, near Bristol.

Dr J. Tasker and Miss C.S. Balch
The engagement is announced between Bill, youngest son of Dr and Mrs John Tasker, of Weathercotes, Hincham, Norfolk, and Catherine (Bonk), daughter of Mr and Mrs James Balch, of The Corner House, Little Dunmow, Essex.

Mr T.J. Waters and Miss S.E. Ashby
The engagement is announced between Tim, elder son of Mr and Mrs John Waters, of Bletchenden Manor Farm, Headcorn, Kent, and Sarah, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Ashby, of Manor Farm, Snettisham, Norfolk.

Mr J.C. Wingate and Miss P.J. Sellings
The engagement is announced between John, son of the late His Honour Granville Wingate, of Mrs Granville Wingate, of Sussex, and Penelope, daughter of Mr and Mrs John B. Sellings, of Burwash, Sussex, and Lagos, Nigeria.

Birthdays today

Professor Isaac Asimov, author, 71; Mr David Bailey, photographer, 53; Mr N.H. Baring, chairman, Commercial Union Assurance, 57; Sir Richard Bayliss, former physician to the Queen, 74; Mr Leopold Brook, former chairman, Associated Nuclear Services, 79; the Duke of Devonshire, 71; Professor Sir Kingsley Dunham, geologist, 81; Mr Walter Harrison, former president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 58; Sir Michael Tippett, OM, CH, composer, 86; Dame Rachel Waterhouse, former chairman, Consumers' Association, 68; the Right Rev Kenneth Woolcombe, former Bishop of Oxford, 67.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Gilbert Murray, scholar, Sydney, NSW, 1866.

DEATHS: Fabian Bellingshausen, polar explorer, Russia, 1832; Alexander William Kinglake, historian of the Crimean War, London, 1891; Sir George Biddell Airy, Astronomer Royal 1836-81, Alnwick, Northumberland, 1892; Sir Edward Tylor, the anthropologist, Wellington, Somerset, 1917; Eleanor Rathbone, social reformer, London, 1946.

Churcher's College, Petersfield

Leit Term begins at Churcher's College on Tuesday, January 1. The Entrance Examinations are to be held on Saturday, February 9. Old Churcherians' Day will be Sunday, March 17, with the Old Boys' v 1st XI Hockey match at 2.30 pm. Term ends on Friday, March 22, following the Founder's Day Service.

OBITUARIES

DAVID HEWLINGS

David Hewlings DFC, AFC, former prison governor and senior official at prison headquarters, died suddenly on December 29 aged 75. He was born on April 23, 1915.

AS THE crisis gathered surreptitiously in the prison system in the early 1970s, senior officials were preparing for pressures that even they could not have anticipated would be so great and, in the case of some jails, destructively overwhelming. Too many prisons were old, built in Victorian times, and there was a much more insidious crisis — of faith. Penological pessimists were casting doubt on the ability of jails to reform the amenable criminal. Yet it was this faith that encouraged idealism among prison staff, lifting their jobs to something greater than a dehumanising routine of locking and unlocking, feeding, exercise and tedious work.

The future of the service depended on staff, and David Hewlings was heavily involved in ensuring their quality by training and development. The men and women being recruited at whatever level would eventually be in the front line, their actions helping to determine how far peace in the system could be sustained. The prison service was in any case in the midst of change, with a tightening of security following a report by Lord Mountbatten and with the introduction of parole. In this context, the work of



Hewlings assumed added significance. Between 1964 and 1975 he was principal of the prison staff college and then in charge of training and the development of management policy at headquarters. Hewlings had an outstanding career in the prison service from 1939-75. He was governor of four penal establishments including Wormwood Scrubs from 1968-9. He was then appointed to headquarters, completing his career in one of the most senior and influential posts in the prison service.

David George Hewlings, who was born at Highgate,

north London, was educated at Cheltenham College and The Queen's College, Oxford. He worked for a period in north Kensington, London, in the social work settlement of Rugby School. He joined the prison service at Portland boral shortly before the outbreak of the second world war.

Joining the RAF, he saw service with 204 Squadron. He was awarded the DFC for his courageous rescue of the crew of a ditched Wellington bomber from drowning off the West African coast in 1943. He put down his Sunderland flying boat in a gale, heavy swell and surf. He had risen to Squadron Leader by the end of the war.

In 1946 he returned to the prison service at Rochester boral before moving to the new open boral at Hewell Grange in Worcestershire. In 1953 he was promoted to governor class III. In 1955 he undertook a period of secondment as chief administration officer for the New Town Development Corporation at Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. On returning to the service he was given the task of opening Welthby boral in Yorkshire, transferring on promotion to Leyhill prison, Gloucestershire, in 1961. From there he was transferred to be principal of the Prison Service Staff College, Wakefield, and later promoted to governor class I. After a period at Wormwood Scrubs he was further promoted to take

charge of the personnel and training division at headquarters. His last appointment was on promotion to controller of operational administration with a place on the prisons board.

Hewlings was strongly influenced by the Tavistock Institute in developing his approach to governing prisons. He was a man of total integrity, deeply concerned with the development of the abilities of both prison staff and prisoners. He saw the great potential of prisons as living communities and gave each of his establishments a very civilised lead.

Although a strong personality and clear in his objectives he worked tirelessly to carry through change by consultation and agreement. He inspired great confidence in his staff through his own very high standards and the manner in which he always put others first. His colleagues, too, had great confidence in him and elected him as chairman of the governors' representative body in 1968.

He retired to Devon where he continued to serve the community in a voluntary capacity as co-ordinator of a project to provide accommodation for offenders. He also served on the Devon probation committee and was active in his local church.

Over the last few years he nursed his wife, Diana, who pre-deceased him by ten days. He leaves a daughter and two sons.

SIR WILLIAM LEECH

William Leech, multi-millionaire businessman and philanthropist, died at his home in Mifford, Northumberland, on December 23 aged 90. He was born on July 15, 1900.

WILLIAM Leech, who created a building empire on Tyneside, died eight days before the announcement in the New Year honours list that he was to receive a knighthood. It recognises his services to charity, to which he donated more than £60 million. He was told of and accepted the honour at the beginning of December and his widow, Ellen, will receive the badge of knighthood from Buckingham Palace.

Among the charities to benefit from his generosity were the Salvation Army and several missionary groups. Recently he gave a £250,000 donation for the launch of a lung research centre at the Freeman hospital in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Born in humble surroundings in Scotswood, Newcastle, he attended Westgate Hill primary school but often missed lessons to work as a baker's errand boy. His first venture into business came when, aged 14, he joined his father, Albert, as a window cleaner, gaining the knowledge he was to use later when setting up his own business. A year later he became an apprentice engineer but his training was interrupted by

service in the Royal Flying Corps between 1916 and 1919. He soon joined the region's ranks of unemployed but quickly returned to the window-cleaning trade, and by 1926 was employing ten boys. His experience in dealing directly with homeowners convinced him that he should turn to building homes, rather than cleaning the windows of existing ones. With his savings he set up Leech Homes in 1932 and his first houses in the Tyneside area were sold for £250 each.

By 1976 his company, William Leech (Builders), was erecting 2,000 houses a year and at its launch on the Stock Market in the same year was worth £8 million. The company was taken over in 1985 by the Beazer group. He eventually retired at the age of 83 to devote more time to his charitable work.

Although he gave money to countless numbers of groups and organisations, the five main beneficiaries were the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Methodist Missionary, the Salvation Army and the Church Missionary Society. In 1980 he was appointed CBE in recognition of his charitable work and in 1989 was given the Paul Harris Medal, one of Rotary International's highest honours.

He leaves two daughters.

ROBERT JACOBS

Robert Louis Jacobs, writer on music and teacher, died on December 26 aged 86. He was born on December 2, 1904.

ROBERT Jacobs combined an analytical mind and a romantic heart, the scholarship of the professional and the enthusiasm of the amateur. This balance sustained him as a writer and lecturer on music for nearly 50 years.

He was born in Melbourne, Australia, moving to London with his family in 1914. At preparatory school he was an early pupil of Harriet Cohen (then setting out on her own career as a pianist). At Balliol College, Oxford, he graduated in history. And after a period with a family legal firm, he went to Vienna in 1929 to study music, subsequently

moving to Berlin where he studied the piano with Alice Schwaabe and from where he contributed music criticism to *The Times*. Struck by stage-fright, he gave up performance aspirations to concentrate on writing about music. Returning to London in 1933, his *Wagner in the Dent "Master Musicians"* series came out in 1935 (and stayed in print for some 40 years). In the second world war Jacobs worked for the Ministry of Information censorship department in Bermuda, returning to writing on music with contributions to the *La Bohème* and *Madam Butterfly* volumes of Eric Crozier's Sadler's Wells Opera Books in 1945-6.

In 1947 he began to lecture for the extra-musical department of London University,

for which he taught WEA classes for nearly 30 years and where his skill at communicating the technicalities of music to non-musicians came into its own. His *Harmony for the Listener: An Unconventional Textbook* (1958) was dedicated "to the students of my WEA classes". In addition to his own books and music book reviews, Jacobs published three volumes of Wagner translations (one with Geoffrey Skelton) and worked on a Freudian interpretation of the Ring.

Robert Jacobs's musical tastes were overwhelmingly romantic and 19th century, with Beethoven taking pride of place. He was widely and crudely read in literature, psychology, history and intellectual history, but he never turned his back on more commonly-shared pleasures. The baring of the left-handed Frank Woolley gave him delight, and shortly before his death he was enjoying the novels of Catherine Cookson. Often hopelessly impractical, he was in youth an elegant ballroom dancer and river punter. As a friend, teacher and relative, his special ability to give his full attention and the best of his judgment to whatever was brought before him at whatever level, will be missed and remembered.

His wife Isabel died in 1986, and he is survived by their only son Oliver.

SIR IAN TRETHOWAN

Sir Brian Young writes:

THERE was much more to Ian Trethowan than anybody would guess from your strangely lukewarm obituary. He was certainly not the slave of current malarkey thinking at the BBC; indeed, he rejected a tendency to behave as though the BBC's image could be improved by denigrating ITV, and he accepted, more than most, the idea that the public would be best served by

a blend of co-operation and competition between broadcasters. More important, Ian was quite exceptionally likable: his gentle and unassuming style did but increase our respect and affection.

When a man who was as straight, as light-hearted, as charming, and as courageous as Ian Trethowan dies, a very wide circle of friends is saddened and looks to you for generous witness to his qualities.

John Young studies the conflict over the killing of animals and birds

How 'pest control' helps wildlife in Britain to thrive

OVER the new year holiday a year ago 170 grey squirrels were shot by marksmen in Kew Gardens provoking an outcry among animal lovers. Last September the headmaster of St Paul's preparatory school, south west London, took a shotgun to scare off a flock of Canada geese which were fouling the school playing fields. The RSPCA said his action was not illegal, since the birds were protected only during the close season from February to August.

The EC recently announced that it intended to introduce a close season for birds such as crows and magpies which are widely regarded as pests. After an outcry from farming and shooting organisations, the government said it would refuse to implement any directive, and Brussels is rethinking the matter.

These are just three examples of the conflict between those who object on principle to the killing of wild animals and birds, or at least feel uneasy about it, and those who claim that it is essential to protect their livelihoods or their sporting interests.

The great majority of birds are permanently protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Game birds and wildfowl may be shot only during the open season. Thirteen species, including crows, jackdaws, jays, magpies, rooks, sparrows, starlings and pigeons may be shot at any time by "authorised persons".

The list of protected animals and insects is inevitably

shorter because of the difficulty of enforcement. Some may be killed only by specified methods, and the rules covering a handful of species such as hares, rabbits, deer and badgers are set out in separate legislation.

Some of the commonest "pests", which cause damage to crops, trees, livestock, fish and gamebirds are:

FOXES. The main difficulty is with young game chicks, and this is likely to worsen with the move to reduce the numbers reared in captivity and increase the wild population. But in hill country in particular they also attack sheep, especially during the lambing season.

Graham Downing, a field sports expert who worked for the Country Landowners' Association, says that hunting can help to keep down the numbers of foxes in upland areas. But in the lowlands the argument is a specious one; if hunting were banned, more foxes would be killed by gamekeepers.

Geese. Brent geese do widespread damage to crops in the coastal region stretching from Lincolnshire to Hampshire. Since they were first given protected status in 1954, their numbers have increased from 20,000 to more than 200,000. Pressure of numbers and the draining and ploughing of marshland have forced them off the estuaries and on to the fields.

Where they can be shown to be causing unacceptable damage, they may be shot under licence. But farmers are being



encouraged with grants to grow "sacrifice" crops in the hope of diverting the birds away from other fields. Canada geese do not emulate their American cousins by migrating long distances but stay in one area, mainly in the west Midlands. There are

reckoned to be more than 50,000 breeding pairs and, by fouling parks and other public places, are not just a nuisance but a health hazard.

Because of the difficulties of shooting in heavily populated areas, the favoured control methods are to pick up the

eggs and replace them with dummies, prick the eggs so that they will not hatch, or round up the goslings before they can fly.

The RSPB admits that the sheer numbers of both Brent and Canada geese constitute a serious menace.

Mink. Escapes from fur farms have bred in large numbers. They are known to attack wildfowl and poultry, but the main destruction is on rivers where they kill almost everything within range, including moorhens and kingfishers. They are best con-

trolled by localised trapping but they are virtually impossible to get rid of.

Grey squirrels. Originally imported from North America, they have virtually taken over from the indigenous red variety except in a few areas, mainly in Scotland. They cause serious damage to forests by gnawing the bark of young trees. The main method of control is by "drey poking", using long poles to shake the nests to the ground while they are breeding.

Deer. Of the five species, roe, red, fallow, sika and muntjac, only the first two cause significant damage. Roe deer mainly inhabit forests where they destroy new plantations by flailing the bark of trees with their horns. There has been a population explosion in the past 20 years.

Red deer feed on crops and have been largely exterminated in most parts of England, apart from Exmoor and the Quantock hills, where they are still controversially hunted with hounds. Supporters of the hunt claim that if it were banned, farmers would exterminate the deer by shooting them.

In Scotland red deer numbers have doubled in the past 30 years to around 300,000, and many have starved to death from food shortages. They provide a strong argument for culling.

Rabbits. After being ravaged by the deliberate spread of myxomatosis in the 1950s, they have made a big comeback, with some evidence that they have become immune to

the disease. The main method of control is by cyanide gassing of warrens, but netting, trapping and shooting are also employed.

Crows and magpies. The RSPB says it would never support culling in general, but would agree to controlled killing where they are causing specific harm, for example to game chick rearing. "What we do not like to see is the position at the moment where anyone can shoot them whenever they like in their gardens," a spokesman said.

Cormorants. These birds regularly raid fish farms and reservoirs, which are easy targets. They are protected under the 1981 act, but may be shot under licence.

Those emotionally opposed to the killing of birds and animals are unlikely to be swayed by the arguments in favour of "pest control." But clear evidence of the damage done by predators is provided by the Game Conservancy which recently announced the results of a six-year experiment on Salisbury Plain.

By comparing two similar areas of farmland, one controlled by a gamekeeper and one without, scientists were able to show that the breeding success of wild partridges could be more than trebled if they were protected from predation by foxes, crows and magpies during nesting time. When the two areas were switched, the results were the same.

"The results are likely to change the perception of many mainstream ecologists," the conservancy says.

Archaeology

Maize study shows early farming in the Amazon basin

ANALYSIS of a sediment core from the upper Amazon basin suggests that farmers growing corn were already settled in the tropical forest six thousand years ago (Norman Hammond, Archaeology Correspondent, writes). Although equally ancient occupation is known from the lower Amazon, this is the first indication that maize cultivation had spread this far south at such an early date.

The evidence comes from Lake Ayachi, a small crater lake near the Rio Santiago, a tributary of the Amazon which drains the southern highlands of Ecuador. The lake lies close to the Peruvian frontier at about 500 metres above sea level, not far east of the base of the Andes.

Dr Dolores Piperno, of the Smithsonian Institution's Tropical Research Institute, has examined twelve samples from the 3.5 metres of sediment in the core taken from the lake-bottom muds, and recovered both opal phytoliths and particulate carbon. Phytoliths are the casts of plant cells, and often have distinctive shapes.

Among those identified so far in the New World have been the distinctive cross-shaped phytoliths of maize, which were first used to detect ancient agriculture on a Maya site in Belize in 1976. Dr Piperno and Dr Deborah Pearsall have been the leaders in using phytolith data to chart the spread of corn at surprisingly early dates in

Panama, on the Pacific coast of Ecuador, and between Mexico and South America. Purely archaeological evidence for such links, in the form of similar pottery or other artifacts, has lagged several centuries behind the paleobotanical indications of contact across tropical America.

In the Lake Ayachi core, palms and forest trees dominate the lowest zone, dated earlier than 7,000 years ago. This undisturbed tropical forest was changed by burning between 7,000 and 5,300 years ago, and the quantity of charcoal is likely to be "signalling a human presence in the lake watershed and associated firing of the vegetation for subsistence activities," Dr Piperno says. The principal plants likely to have been cultivated, such as manioc and papaya, would leave no phytoliths, however.

Thus the appearance of maize at least 5,300 years ago is the first evidence for an exotic cultivar, and at the same time forest plants and trees decline in importance, suggesting land clearance. The abundance of maize phytoliths is matched only by samples from actual fossil cultivation plots in Mexico, suggesting that the Ayachi fields were close to the water's edge, perhaps along the lake margins left exposed by sinking water levels.

"Prehistoric maize cultivation in terra firma forests often has not been considered a viable subsistence option," Dr Piperno says. Factors such as poor soil and lack of a suitable dry season have been cited as reasons for this, although recent research has shown that parts of the Amazon basin have good soils, or a dry season, or both.

Maize cultivation seems to have become increasingly important in the area around 400 BC, although parts of the forest cover remained. This is the same date as Dr Anna Roosevelt's discovery of maize farming at Parana, on the Orinoco in Venezuela, and Dr Piperno suggests that her own results suggest that corn cultivation may have a greater antiquity in northern South America as well.

The results from Ayachi and Parana bolster the argument advanced for many years by the late Professor Donald Lathrap that the tropical forests of Amazonia were a major focus of economic and cultural innovation at a very early date. The discovery of the New World's earliest pottery in the region recently confirms this view, and shows that the historical low population density and cultural backwardness of the Amazon has always been backward in comparison with the Andean and Pacific coast cultures.

Source: *Journal of Archaeological Science* 17: 665-671.

University news

Wales University of Wales College of Medicine Grants

Dr M J Owen, Professor P McGuffin, Institute of Medical Genetics and Department of Psychological Medicine, £194,093 from Medical Research Council for three years in support of a study into DNA linkage in Marfan's syndrome.

Professor P Harper, Dr D Shaw, Dr M Upadhyaya, Institute of Medical Genetics, £63,872 from the ARCC for three years in support of a study into the molecular genetic analysis of Von Recklinghausen Neurofibromatosis.

Dr B P Morgan, Department of Medical Biochemistry, £67,988 from Multiple Sclerosis Society for three years in support of a study for the complement and cytotoxic T cells as mediators of myelin and oligodendrocyte injury.

Dr D Shaw, Professor P Harper, Institute of Medical Genetics, £78,508 from the Medical Research Council for three years in support of a study into the linkage disequilibrium and candidate genes in Huntington's disease.

Dr D Wynford-Thomas, of the Department of Pathology, £66,431 from Cancer Research Campaign for one year in support of a study of cellular and molecular analysis of an epithelial tumour model.

Professor A Henderson, Department of Cardiology, £312,534 from the British Heart Foundation for seven years in support of the following project: Is growth regulation altered in vascular smooth muscle cells derived from human coronary atherosclerotic plaque?

Dr D J Shaw, Department of Medical Genetics, £49,145 from the Wellcome Trust for two years in support of a study of candidate genes for myotonic dystrophy.

Sale room

£10million goal for clock collection

A COLLECTION of 200 clocks and watches owned by notable historical figures goes on show in London next month as part of a world tour before being auctioned in Geneva on April 14 (John Shaw writes).

An exclusive Breguet timepiece provides a common link between Napoleon, George IV, Lord Elgin and Queen Caroline of Naples. The collection will be on view at Chaux, the jeweller's at 20 Bond Street, between February 5 and 9 before the sale at Habsburg, the Swiss auctioneers.

The firm has collected the pieces over the past two years and is confident they will sell for a total of £10 million. It is claimed to be the largest collection of its kind, a complex clock and matching wrist watch, is estimated to be the most expensive piece and expected to fetch in excess of £500,000.

A collection of golfing memorabilia formerly belonging to the late Bernard Darwin, golf correspondent of *The Times* for 39 years, will be sold at Phillips in Chester on January 18. It consists of rare books and clubs he left to the Dornay House Club, Rye, on his death in 1961.

Some of the items are so valuable they had to remain permanently in the safe. Mr Darwin wrote widely on all aspects of the game and for many years he was president of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society.

Michael Newman, an auctioneer and valuer who has held sales in Plymouth, Devon, has a total of an association with Bonhams of Knightsbridge, one of the top four London salerooms. His auctions are ceasing but valuations will continue and goods will be sold through Bonhams in London and Honiton.

Church news

THE REV David Lane was named yesterday as principal of the College of the Resurrection, Miffield, West Yorkshire, the Anglican theological college.

He succeeds Father Denis Lloyd, aged 51, who resigned in October to become a Roman Catholic.

Mr Lane, aged 55, who was vice-principal of the Anglo-Catholic college, has been running it since the departure. Ordained in Barbados, he is a former student and director of studies at the college.

Resignations and retirements
The Rev John Cutler, Rector, Yoxall, and Dean's Vicar in

Lichfield Cathedral, diocese of Lichfield, to retire.

The Rev Canon Ronald McLeod, Rector, Tichen Abbas, and Avonmouth, diocese of Winchester, to retire as from 6 April 1991.

The Rev Robert Sturman, Vicar, St Mary, Prescott, diocese of Liverpool, to resign as from 31 January 1991 for health reasons.

The Rev Canon Brian T Thompson, Rector, Woodbridge, St Mary, diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, to resign as from 2 April 1991 (for health reasons).

The Rev Geoffrey O Wilbourne, Vicar, Hemmingbrough, diocese of York, to retire as from 31 March 1991.

ON THIS DAY

JANUARY 2 1935



Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886-1954), the distinguished German conductor and composer, became, wily-nilly, involved in political issues during the years of the Nazi regime in Germany. He fell foul of the authorities for his defence of the composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), whose music was proscribed. Erich Kleiber, whose music was proscribed, is remembered at another admired conductor, who was, his Covent Garden for, among other things, his performance of Alban Berg's opera, *Wozzeck*, in the 1950s.

NAZI WAR WITH MUSICIANS: CRITICS DISMISSED

Another critical point has been reached in the developments in German musical life following the resignation by Herr Furtwängler of his directorships of the Berlin State Opera and the Berlin State Philharmonic Orchestra. Herr Bertin State Philharmonic Orchestra's Erich Kleiber, who was Herr Furtwängler's associate at the State Opera, is again submitting his resignation, he conducted at the Opera his resignation; he last time before Herr Clemens Krauss, the new Chief Director from Vienna, assumes his duties.

When Herr Furtwängler withdrew on account of the attacks against him by the "National Socialist Culture Community" for his defence of Herr Hindemith, the composer, and defence of Herr Kleiber, who was asked to be other reasons, Herr Kleiber was not accepted, and released. His resignation was not accepted, and he was held to his contract, which does not expire until February. Herr Kleiber now expires until February.

maintains that the contract is invalid, because there is a clause in the contract providing that no other director shall be placed above Herr Kleiber, who was originally appointed general director.

It was rumoured just before Christmas that Herr Furtwängler had gone abroad, and he did for a time contemplate a visit to Cairo. But it was put to him by the authorities that a journey abroad so soon after his resignation might produce demonstrations harmful to German prestige. Strenuous efforts are now apparently being made to induce him to resume chair of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, but so far the negotiations have not proved very promising.

Herr Hindemith, over whom the whole crisis came to a head, also wished to give up his professorship at the High School of Music. His request was refused, and he was merely granted a few weeks' leave, which has not yet expired. One effect of the conflict has been to give a popularity that they have never enjoyed before to Herr Hindemith's compositions; at several concerts compositions by him have had to be repeated again and again at the insistence of enthusiastic audiences.

Like other cultural and spiritual conflicts of these times this conflict by no means discloses a clear-cut alignment of National Socialists against "reactionaries." The opportunity was taken to deprive Herr Hindemith and formerly of the *Vossische Zeitung*, of his membership of the Reich Press Chamber, and therewith of his right to exercise his profession in Germany, apparently on account of his support of Herr Hindemith and other composers. But the music critic of the *Völkischer Beobachter* himself left victim; he, it seems, was not sufficiently wholehearted in his condemnation of them.

At present all parties are felt to be too deeply committed for the matter to be successfully smoothed over.

God is to be trusted, the God who calls his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
1 Corinthians 1:9 CMB

BIRTHS

GAMIE - On 29 December to Emily and Nicholas, a son Thomas.

HARRISON - On December 29, to Tamara (nee Nall) and Rupert, a daughter, Anna Hollywyn.

ROBERTS - On December 12th, at the Portland Hospital to Fiona (nee Wyllie) and Peter, a daughter, William Wyllie, both well.

WILKES - On December 12th, to Anne and Michael, a daughter, Nadia, a sister for Vanessa and Roseanna.

LOW - On December 6th 1990, to Mrs. Patricia (nee) Kirkcaldy, to Philippa (nee) Kirkcaldy and John, a son, Robert.

PALMER - On December 29th, to Angela and Jeremy, a son, James.

JACOBSEN - On December 29th, to Anne and William, a son, James.

WRIGHT - On December 29th, to Charlotte (nee Sillars) and Tim, a daughter Rebecca Catherine.

DEATHS

BEHLAND - On December 24th, suddenly, Norah, wife of the late Rev. Basil Behl, aged 82.

GASSELL - On December 29th, to Mrs. G. C. Gaskell, aged 75 years.

WILSON - On December 29th, to Mrs. W. Wilson, aged 75 years.

TEADON - On December 29th, to Mrs. T. Teadon, aged 75 years.

FRISWELL - On December 29th, to Mrs. F. Friswell, aged 75 years.

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WAINSTALL - On December 29th, peacefully, at home, after a long illness, Mrs. Waininstall, aged 75.

WOOD - On December 29th, peacefully at home, after a long illness, Mrs. Wood, aged 75.

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Summerhill's prototype pupil

Zoe Readhead's childhood is well documented. She was the original free child, the "self-regulated baby" born to the pioneering educator A.S. Neill, and educated at his daring model school of Summerhill on the Suffolk coast. Neill was a lifelong rebel: son of a Scottish dominie, repressed and beaten, he became a teacher himself and one day threw his tawse on the fire with the announcement that he was "on the side of the bairns".

His daughter — born when he was 63 — became the culminating proof of his lifetime's theories: a prototype of "grace and balance and happiness". He described her lovingly as a child with no fears, no repressions, unspoilt by parental compulsion to do anything. Running naked, swearing cheerfully over her simple toys, Zoe lies at the heart of his books on the Summerhill experiment: a beacon in a Forties Britain where most of her compatriots were "moulded, conditioned, repressed" victims of timetable feeding, grim pottery-training and dull schools.

The children of educational gurus — like those of beloved children's authors — are not always grateful. One might well imagine that a practical Suffolk farmer's wife in her mid-forties might have disowned the whole business by now, and sent her own four children to schools with firmly buttoned-up uniforms. What is remarkable about Zoe Readhead is that 17 years after his death she runs her father's old school by her father's principles, and is spiritedly fighting his corner. Last weekend HM Inspectors reported on one of their rare visits to Summerhill, criticising its tatty buildings and questioning some of its methods (the lack of any compulsory classes at all has been sticking in the establishment's craw for 70 years). There were tabloid headlines such as

How does A.S. Neill's daughter, his 'unspoilt' child, view criticism of her father's school, and of his philosophy?

Libby Purves reports

"Smarten up or close down": a nation currently tightening up hard on children's learning displaying a palpable desire to peck little Summerhill to death.

Mrs Readhead shrugs tolerantly at the criticism. "People," she says, "do not send their children to Summerhill to get the traditional nine GCSEs."

With the insouciant confidence of a true Neillian child, she says that some of the inspectors' comments "show a basic misunderstanding of our philosophy. HMI have never studied free range children before. As for classes, they should understand that because the bigger children are organising and governing the school they actually have less time to do class work."

"Take Daniel: he passed five GCSEs well, but he couldn't have taken nine because he had responsibilities. He was a 'carriage-kid' [older children live in disused railway carriages]. So he may have fewer certificates, but in return he's got a great insight into human beings. He'd be a better manager than a lot of others. Employers and colleges are always telling us how confident and motivated our children are: they work because they want to." HM Inspectors, operating in an era when the national curriculum sets out scores of "attainment targets" on tight little forms, might be forgiven for a touch of culture-shock when a

principal tranquilly says: "If a child doesn't want to learn to read, it would be wrong to compel him."

However, HMI praised the wholehearted attitude of those children who do learn, and commented on the well-adjusted, effective decision-making of the community meetings which make the rules. There is an odd echo of the 1949 HMI's report which found the children: "Delightful. They may lack, here and there, some of the conventions of manners, but their friendliness and naturalness made them very easy pleasant people."

As for the school's decaying fabric of scattered huts and buildings, Mrs Readhead says: "We opened here in 1927. Of course it's falling apart a bit. The rain gets into some of the lesson-huts. But children prefer it. They'd rather spill things than have carpets everywhere. We have begun the work, anyway." Summerhill, she emphasises, is not in danger.

Another inspectors' comment, on the free-and-easy relationships between staff and children, she reads as a veiled warning. "I think they were concerned to protect us from accusations. This is incredibly sad. Will the Nineties be remembered as the decade adults were told not to cuddle children? Frankly, it would be extremely difficult for anyone to do anything unpleasant without everyone knowing. Our kids aren't conditioned to obey adults: if anyone put a hand on their bottom I suspect they would probably round on him and say 'Piss off.'"

I suspected at first that Mrs Readhead's tenure of Summerhill was the result of some kind of paternal anointing: it is hard to reconcile Neill's ideal of free individuality with the fact that his only child has ended up doing precisely what her father did, in precisely his way. She denies it. "He may have wanted me to go to university, but he never talked of

it. He died not knowing that I would keep on Summerhill. My mother ran it until 1983, and at first I wasn't interested." She became a riding instructor and married a local farmer. "What changed my mind was having my own children. I had never realized how unusual my freedom was as a child and how rich a time it was."

Amy, now 18, William and Henry are Summerhill children; Neill, the youngest, is only four. His mother administers the school as principal, assisted by her husband Tony, a farmer (who after a conventional grammar-school education is a total convert, saying modestly, "My role is to organize fire-doors and mutton about lights being left on"). They hire graduates to teach.

"What qualifies me to run Summerhill," Mrs Readhead says, "is that I grew up here. People

think freedom is easy, but it needs working at. There are rules, about smoking and drugs and sex and keeping the law. It's just that they've been worked out by the children, not imposed."

People also think that if you give no moral leadership (anathema at Summerhill) you end up with Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, all savagery and tribal warfare. "Yes. But if I told that story at school and told them to imagine the plane crash, they'd find it perfectly obvious what to do. 'We'd have a meeting — set up a building committee.' It's what they do all the time. *Lord of the Flies* is a portrait of hateful, repressed children. The sort who become hateful repressed adults."

Having said that, one of her most vivid school memories is of the day she and a group of friends ran away. "It was something to do

with a gang and a fight. I remember Neill coming for us and saying, 'Don't cry, it looks terrible, what will people think of me forcing you back?' — and laughing."

One can imagine A.S. Neill laughing. One of the endearing things about his writings is his ability to mock his own ideas when incompletely digested. He tells of parents who pointed proudly at their children as they wrecked his sofa or pounded piano-keys with a mallet — "I fear that I blushed". He used to set self-mocking exams at Summerhill, on the lines of: "Where are the following: Madrid, Thursday Island, yesterday, love, democracy, my pocket screwdriver?" The loyalty of Summerhill children is his monument: a group of them are trying, in this seventieth anniversary year of his first school, to raise £1.25 million for repairs.

But his legacy is more universal. Schools are not the places of stern conformity which they once were: it is significant that almost half the 65 pupils at Summerhill now are foreign, mostly from neurotically competitive Japanese schools. Optional classes may still be an eccentricity, but Neillian ideals of tolerance, individuality and child-centred learning are widespread.

Not that he, or his daughter, would ever admit it. Ask Zoe Readhead about the national curriculum and she sighs. "I try not to get involved in Education," she says. "It's not much to do with us. What the rest of the country does to children in schools I don't consider to be educating them at all." Summerhill, 70 years on and into the second generation, is still cussedly, and actually rather magnificently, out on its own.

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Children of Summerhill: Zoe and Tony Readhead with their children, from left, Henry, aged 14, Neill, four, William, 17, and Amy, 18

Four years ago a Scottish businessman died in his car during a blizzard on the notorious Cock Bridge to Tomintoul road in the Grampian mountains. He died, not from hypothermia, but from carbon monoxide poisoning. Exhaust fumes had leaked into the car heating system. He had broken one of the cardinal rules of survival in a car — if you run the engine, always leave a window partially open for ventilation.

Cold comfort in the driving snow

For less than £10 a head, clients get a two-and-a-half-hour lecture on everything from basic human physiology to the discreet use of a condom as a fill-it-yourself hot water bottle. The physiology section is provided by Dr Iain Light, a former member of the British Antarctic Survey, who is always introduced as Dr Death on the grounds that he knows more ways of dying in a snowdrift than anyone else. His partner is Andrew Avery, a former Royal Navy survival expert.

According to Dr Light you are likely to be dead when your body temperature (normally 37°C) gets down to 25°C. As the human body also loses up to 30 per cent of its heat through the head, "enough energy to power a bedside lamp", it follows that a hat or some sort of head covering, fashioned from a paper bag, fluffy seat cover or spare pair of tights, should be worn in emergencies.

The subject of tights forms a crucial part of the lectures. Each participant is reminded of the

includes hat, gloves, two pairs of socks, waterproof outer clothing, wellington boots, sleeping bag and two dustbin liners, as well as a Thermos flask of hot water, and a chemically heated, foil-wrapped food pack, available at outdoors stores.

Even the question of bodily wastes is touched upon, which is where the business of the condom hot water bottle comes in, although it is not included in the checklist: more of an optional extra. "Let's face it, nobody in this country is likely to be stranded for much more than 24 hours," Mr Avery says.

But, as the carbon monoxide poisoning case demonstrated, death can come long before a snow plough. "Never run the engine without leaving a bit of window open for ventilation," Mr Avery says. "And never run the engine without first checking the exhaust is clear, otherwise fumes can escape back into the car." Curiously, survival in the snow relies not just on putting on as much

clothing as possible, but also on taking it off at the right time. Getting too hot while digging creates sweat. Water next to the skin is the quickest way of losing body heat, particularly in a wind. Better to shed some under-layers first, and replace them afterwards when back in the shelter of a car.

"We suggest establishing a routine," says Mr Brand. "Do whatever work needs doing, like digging out the exhaust, get back in the car, then run the engine and heater for 15 minutes every hour."

Going for help, unless the motorist can actually see his or her destination, is discouraged. There are countless cases of people being found only yards from safety. "We always say that the art of survival is common sense," Mr Brand says. On the whole he advises against following the suggestion of a Grampian snow plough driver who, when asked what he would do if his plough got stuck, replied: "Torch the bugger."

ALASTAIR ROBERTSON

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Details from the RGIT Survival Centre, 338 King Street, Aberdeen AB2 3BJ (0224 638970).

& BRIEFLY Pirates in the system

MANY young computer buffs are discovering the software they were given as Christmas gifts is duff. As many as ten out of the 16 games in some software packages sold as part of a package deal, with popular computers were found to be faulty. The market for "pirated" software has caused manufacturers to step up their security so that some games require the knowledge of a special password code, printed on paper which cannot successfully be photocopied. Naturally many of these codes have been pilfered by potential pirates from the packs, rendering the legitimate software useless. So check that what you buy comes in a sealed pack, or has all the requisite extras.

Rays of hope

TESCO and Marks & Spencer have stated that they will not stock irradiated foods (which became legal to sell in Britain yesterday), and a spokesman for Sainsbury's says: "There are no irradiated foods on the market for us to sell at the moment, and we have no plans to introduce irradiated food until a specific need has been identified." The phrases "Irradiated so-and-so" or "So-and-so treated with ionising radiation" are supposed to be clearly displayed on packets. But Derek Prentice, the assistant director and campaigns co-ordinator of the Consumers' Association, notes that "even if councils had enough enforcement officers to ensure that the new regulations were being carried out, there is still no commercially available method of testing for irradiated food, which makes a nonsense of the law."

The new year also brings the labelling suggestion "Use by", which will replace the ambiguous "Sell by" date in April. Bread and other foods which may be past their peak of freshness after a certain date, but are probably not dangerous to health at that stage, will be labelled "Best before".

This little prig...

A NEW species has been defined. The Prig is (1) "a born-again non-smoker who neither drinks, dances nor has sex unless absolutely necessary" and (2) "a God-fearing social animal who wears state-of-the-art running shoes, and demands a tasteful life and tasteless food" — and is the subject of *Prig Tales*, a social "guide to surviving the self-righteous Nineties" by the New York *Nesday* cartoonist M.G. Lord.

Branching out

ENTERPRISING garden centres, such as The Jardiniere in Hampton in Arden, west Midlands, have a solution to the dreary problem of what to do with Christmas trees after Twelfth Night. Electric shredders turn the trees into useful garden mulch which, if spread, will help keep weeds down. The Jardiniere is offering the service free and will sell the mulch to benefit a children's charity.

V.M.

A few more words to the wise

Fortnum & Mason is pleased to announce to their customers that the Reductions Period commences on Thursday 3rd January at 9.30am and continues until Saturday 19th January.

And that Ladies, Men's & Children's Fashions together with Household & Gift items all show savings of a considerable nature — many at 1/3 and 1/2 price.

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The reality of illusion

After *Little Dorrit*, the director Christine Edzard's new film offers a parable for our times

CHRISTINE Edzard, whose film *The Fool* premieres in London this month, has acquired a reputation as the quintessential British film director through her acclaimed six-hour film of Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. But that is her first illusion: she was born in Paris, of German and Polish parents.

Ms Edzard, aged 45, is the daughter of two artists, and has an artist's eye for illusions. She is obsessed with details, and will spend as long matching a colour as she will directing a scene. But she takes equal pains to ensure that her message is not lost in the exquisiteness of her medium. "I wish we could get away from all this 'quaint costume drama' stuff," she says briskly.

She takes pride in inviting visitors into the converted warehouse in London's Docklands which is both home to her and her husband, the producer Richard Goodwin, and to their company, Sands Films. In the warehouse thousands of costumes are sewn by hand as they were last century, and plaster is wrought by artistic alchemy into gold. But it irks her that visitors are sometimes so awed by artifice they lose sight of the truth it is created to convey.

Though the Victorian atmosphere of *The Fool* hangs heavy and though the film was inspired by the writings of Henry Mayhew, a 19th century social chronicler who observed street life with a zoologist's eye, it could equally have been set in the City of London at the dawn of 1991. The plot, at its simplest, is about a financial "sting". The moral — again, oversimplified — is that greed is not good. The combination makes a perfect parable for our times.

"These things come in waves of



Take two: Christine Edzard and Derek Jacobi on the set of *The Fool*

about every ten years, when an awareness grows of greed and financial misdeeds, and there is a reaction against them," Ms Edzard says.

She was fascinated by "the parallels Mayhew drew between cheating in the street and cheating in the bank" and became intrigued with the idea of a character who could move between the two worlds of wheeler-dealers, of the street and the City. The financial con perpetrated by Derek Jacobi as a lowly clerk who leads a double life as an aristocratic avenging angel gives the film its timely thrust and Mayhew's work a satisfying conclusion.

Ms Edzard started her career in Britain with more innocent subject-matter — *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, which she and her husband produced in 1972. She is coy about production costs and profits but, when pressed, she reveals that *The Fool* cost only £4 million to make. Sponsors are Channel 4, British Screen and a private investor, John Tyler.

The cast list reads like a royal command performance: Derek Jacobi, Maria Aitken, Cyril Cusack, Stratford Johns, John McEnery, Patricia Hayes, Michael

Horden, Miranda Richardson, Corin Redgrave. Ms Edzard's unconventional approach explains why she is able to attract so many leading actors. "We make films more in the style of a theatrical company, which actors seem to like," she says.

The company is completely self-contained. "Everything is made on the premises," Ms Edzard says. "Not necessarily for economy, but so that we can keep control of every detail."

Louis XIV chairs are concocted of plywood, unusual woodgrain finishes are produced by *trompe l'oeil* wizardry with paint. The effects are so striking that the Museum of the City of London has staged a long-running exhibition, "Furnishing the Fool".

"Reality," Ms Edzard says, "is infinitely detailed and extraordinarily quirky and it is that quirkiness which is so difficult to reproduce. She intends to carry that ability to reproduce life's quirks into her next project — "a contemporary one", she stresses, to show that she is not stuck in a time warp.

VICTORIA MCKEE

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Part 2 of *Little Dorrit* will be shown on BBC2 tonight at 7.25pm.

THEATRE

Final curtain for a Wells farrago?

As the sixtieth anniversary of its opening approaches, Jeremy Kingston looks at the past and future of Sadler's Wells Theatre

Next Sunday, Sadler's Wells Theatre — that gaunt chunk of brick in Rosebery Avenue, Islington — celebrates its diamond jubilee. The building, opened by Lilian Baylis on January 6, 1931, was intended to give north London what the Old Vic was providing for the south: a popular home for Shakespeare, ballet and opera. The famously visionary enterprise of Baylis, who once prayed aloud to God, "Send me good actors who are cheap", established companies that have since become the Royal Ballet, the Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Opera and the Royal National Theatre.

On Sunday evening, guest artists from these four institutions will perform scenes from ballets, operas and plays associated with the Wells. Princess Margaret will be present. There will be tributes and recollections. There are certain to be trumpets. And while all this celebration is raising the roof, the management and well-wishers of the theatre will be wondering how they can pull the building down.

This sounds like a *Through the Looking-Glass* version of the cry that announces the end of a reign. Instead of "The King is dead. Long live the King!" we have "Long live Sadler's Wells. Sadler's Wells is dead." The reason is simple. The theatre can no longer meet the needs of its audience and artists. The stage is too small; its facilities antiquated. Before each performance, the narrow foyer turns into a Sargasso Sea choked in all directions with slowly circling masses struggling to collect tickets, order drinks and buy T-shirts.

Perhaps these difficulties could be endured with a stoical shrug if the function of the Wells had remained unchanged from its early days. But the world has changed since 1931. The theatre

long ago stopped trying to be an Old Vic north of the river. Its ballet and opera companies travelled on to the larger premises of Covent Garden, the London Coliseum and the Birmingham Hippodrome. Sadler's Wells no longer has a resident company (although London City Ballet is currently filling the void) and under its present director, Stephen Remington, it has become the London showcase for companies, chiefly dance, visiting from abroad. It is this important and unique role, for no other London venue is readily available for visiting dance companies, that is imperilled by the confines of its stage.

Paul Richardson, the long-serving technical director at the Wells, recalls the fearful night when the interval of Cologne Opera's *Fidelio* lasted an hour while, behind the curtains, a stage crew of 45 struggled to change the sets. "The Netherlands Dance Theatre won't come back here. Alvin Ailey won't come back. The Dance Theatre of Harlem say they can't play here." These are major companies that Sadler's Wells can no longer show. Modern choreography and modern productions are planned for much larger stages.

Sixty years ago, ballets were smaller and British ballet still in its infancy. Baylis's dream was to alternate productions of ballet and Shakespeare between the Old Vic and the Wells, but this soon had to be abandoned because, as Dame Ninette de Valois remembers, "It cost too much moving the stuff. We decided to give the Wells over to opera and ballet entirely. The auditorium was much bigger there. The stage was small, but we were small. We did things there because we wanted to introduce the classics, even if on a small scale."

These classics included the British premieres of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia*, the core of the ballet repertoire. Ashton's



Backstage scene at the Wells: Angus McBean's celebrated photographic portrait of the corps de ballet waiting for its entrance

Façade was premiered here, and de Valois' *Checkmate*.

"There wasn't really any problem of space then," recalls de Valois. "You accepted it. If we hadn't cheerfully managed them, we wouldn't be here today. But today, you see, everything is bigger, and the Wells can't make itself any bigger. If they push out, they're in the road."

The present building is listed, but more because of its associations with Baylis, de Valois and fond memories of former productions. After the second world war, for instance, the theatre re-opened with the premiere of Britten's *Peter Grimes*: the birth of modern British opera is customarily dated from that moment. The 1931

structure, cautiously described in Kimball's *Guide to London Theatre* as "Thirties-Modernist with neo-Classical allusions", is just the latest of several built on the site since a Mr Sadler, in 1683, provided entertainment for visitors taking the waters at a local well.

Appropriately, the scheme for a new theatre continues the aquatic link through the involvement of Thames Water, which wants to demolish its old headquarters on the site next door. "The opportunity this presents is just tremendous," says Remington. "Offices and housing will help finance the building of a new theatre. We enjoy good relations with Thames Water and our talks about possible schemes have been productive. It's the same with Islington, our local borough, who are keen that a development will be part commercial, part community gain."

"Some companies don't want to come back because our facilities are not up to their standard, but others we can't afford. In order to carry on, new theatre or no new theatre, with our unique function as a showcase for lyric theatre, our entrepreneurial role needs to be recognised and provision made for this to continue."

Over to Tim Renton and Peter Palumbo, who might like to consider, while the trumpets sound next Sunday, the words of Ninette de Valois: "Quite apart from what Sadler's Wells has done in the past, it needs to go on and do something in the future. I would like to see it re-built and have all its original companies as visitors."

BRIEFING

Orthodox disapproval

GREECE's leading film-maker, Theo Angelopoulos, has been excommunicated by the Greek Orthodox Church. Also included in Bishop Augustino Kandiotis's sentence are Marcello Mastroianni, star of Angelopoulos's new film, *The Broken Flight of the Swan*, Tonino Guerra (the film's scriptwriter), and the rest of the crew. The reasons given by the Bishop are that the film degrades marriage, the family and the armed forces. For the next four years, the film-makers will be prohibited from marrying, taking communion or being buried within the bishop's diocese.

Most of Angelopoulos's previous films, including *The Travelling Players*, *The Beekeeper* and, most recently, *Landscape in the Fog*, have been distributed in Britain.

Hand of Dmitri

FOUR pages from the autograph manuscript of Shostakovich's Symphony No 14, written in 1969, have been acquired by the Britten-Pears Library, which is housed in Benjamin Britten's former home in Aldeburgh. The pages, which will be the first music manuscript in Shostakovich's hand to find a home in Britain, contain the tenth movement of the symphony, setting Rilke's poem "The Death of a Poet". It is appropriate that this manuscript will be housed at Aldeburgh, because Shostakovich dedicated the symphony to Britten. The two composers struck up a close friendship after their first meeting, in 1960.

Last chance . . .

PRIME ministers appear and disappear; only Cliff Richard really seems to go on and on. Pop music's most durable performer, 50 last October, has been packing them in on a ten-week tour that dips heavily into teddy-boy nostalgia, repackaged for the laser age. Along the way he managed to bag the coveted Christmas No 1 single slot (with "Saviour's Day"), for the third successive year. Not bad for a singer who cut his first single before some of his fans' parents were born. He is at Wembley Arena (081-900 1234) until Monday.

GALLERIES: HUNGARY



Hans Knoll: "The small class of nouveau riche would rather buy a new car, not art."

Taking an unofficial line

As Hungarians celebrated their second Christmas without communism, they found a wide choice of presents to buy. Shops bulged with prized consumer and electronics goods, long absent during decades of one party rule and central economic planning. But besides the video recorders and colour televisions, they were also tempted for the first time to buy high-quality works of art. After years of being denounced as a symbol of bourgeois decadence, an art market of sorts is slowly emerging in Hungary. Until the early 1980s, "official" art was the norm and galleries were controlled by the state, offering to tourists folklore scenes, painted by a select group of privileged, subsidised artists. Now, in the spirit of re-discovered capitalism and the move to a market economy, the Knoll Gallery, the first private, Western-style art outlet in Hungary, has opened in Budapest.

So far, however, sales are modest. Director Hans Knoll, a 33-year-old Austrian who also runs a gallery in Vienna, faces the difficult task of re-moulding Hungarian art tastes from a preference for kitschy to sunsets over the *puszta* to the appreciation of work on the cutting edge of contemporary Western and East European art. He has featured Austrian, Hungarian and Czech artists, but only a few works of them considered "difficult" or intellectual, veering towards conceptualism and minimalism. Local response was muted.

Although prices are slightly lower than in nearby West might spend in Hungary's European capitals, Hungary's worsening financial crisis means that buyers are usually museums or foreigners with a museum or foreigner's cash surplus. "The small class of nouveau riche in Hungary would rather buy a new car or a house, not art, and especially a house, not art," Knoll

Ernest Beck, in Budapest, reports on the emergence of a Western-style market in fine art

says with some exasperation.

There are some galleries in Budapest that still display what can only be described as low quality, derivative *schlock* — re-worked pop art, country village scenes, and drippy Jackson Pollock lookalikes in gilded frames. But the majority of the young and talented new generation of Hungarian artists, who are flourishing with the complete abolition of censorship, must sell privately to Western buyers.

Most artists agree that what is needed is a wide range of galleries and "art spaces" offering a broad spectrum of quality work, as well as an art-buying public stimulated by high calibre exhibitions, critical art magazines, and a permanent museum of contemporary art — none of which yet exists.

To try to jump-start the market, Knoll told visitors to his first exhibition by Hungarian-American artist Joseph Kosuth, that they could pay the currency denoted by their passport — if the price was "one thousand", it could be paid in sterling, dollars or even Hungarian forints.

A small, colourful woodcut by the German artist, A.R. Penck, sold for under £400, while a Rauschenberg lithograph fetched somewhat more. Despite considerable interest and a well-attended opening, complete with arty types in black cigarette smoke and Chablis, only a few works found favour with buyers.

Knoll believes that a lively domestic market will eventually develop, but only in the long term as disposable in-

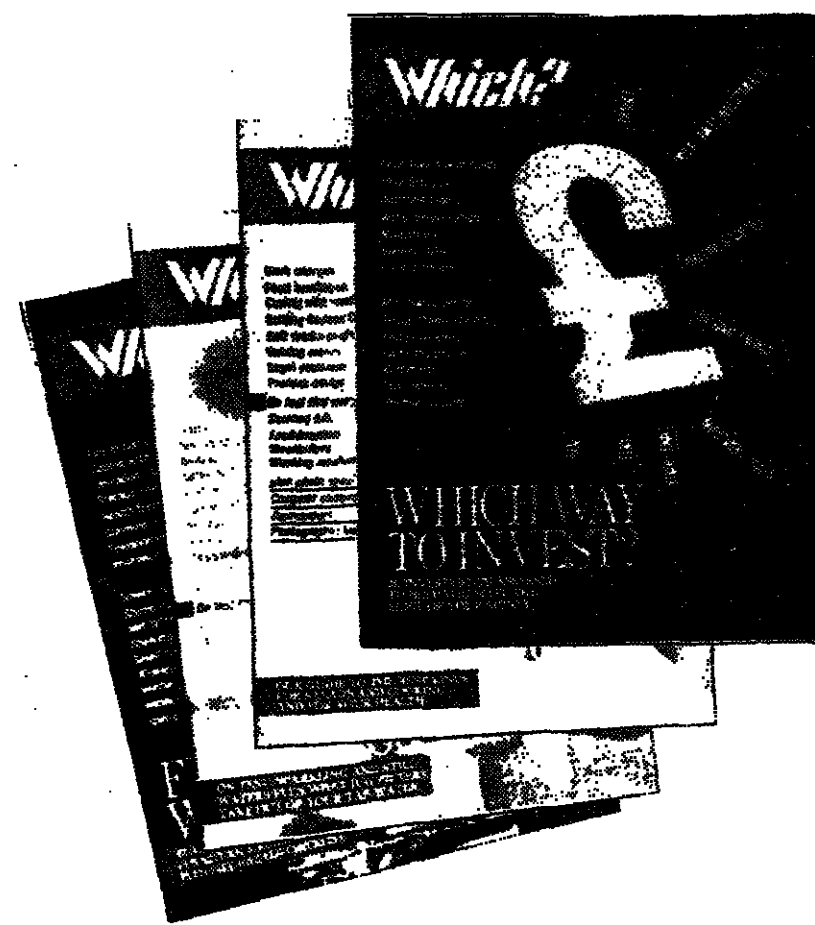
comes increase and consumers become sated with spending money on electronic gadgets. With one-fifth of the population, or about two million people, living below the poverty level, observers see a decade-long gestation period as accurate. Meanwhile, other attempts are being made to bring good, innovative art to the market. Laszlo Rajk, an MP who is also an architect and sculptor specialising in deconstructivist works, runs the Na-Na gallery as a collaborative effort with two artist friends. Their field is slightly more experimental than Knoll: this month's exhibition features computer-made sheet music from modern composers; another concerned *szamizdat* literature as works of art.

Victor Menshikov, a Soviet émigré to Hungary, operates a private art agency in his home high in the Buda hills, concentrating on Hungarian artists of the 1920s and 1930s, a forgotten generation which, he says, was as prolific and talented as its more well-known Soviet counterpart. His only contemporary artist is Hungarian painter Laszlo Feherk, who scored a critical success at this year's Venice Biennale, and whose work sells for up to £3,500.

Completing the scene is the local Sotheby's office, the auction firm's first East European operation. This was opened, says director Soraya Stubenberg, to develop a Hungarian market and "to advise Hungarians on market values".

Perhaps the biggest boost to building a domestic market will be the first Budapest Art Fair, planned for next March and modelled on fairs in Cologne and Basel. Artists will rent their own stands and charge what they like, in true free market fashion, and perhaps, turn a profit by direct sales.

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The sincerest form of flattery

Rediscovered Cinema Bologna

NOT since they were casting Scarlett O'Hara for *Gone With the Wind* has there been so much speculation as over Richard Attenborough's search for the star of his film biography of Charlie Chaplin. To pass the time while waiting, he held, Bologna's Festival of Cinema Ritrovato - Rediscovered Cinema - has been resurrecting the work of earlier impersonators of Chaplin.

In fact many of them were not so much impersonators as imitators. A measure of the unique stature and popularity of Chaplin is that he remains the only artist in film history who was deliberately counterfeited on screen.

In 1917, when he had been in pictures only two years, Chaplin was obliged to bring a blanket suit against half a dozen companies who were producing spurious Chaplin pictures. Later he secured an injunction against a certain "Charles Aplin" - the stage name of an actor called Charles Amador.

Two of the imitators, Billy Ritchie and Billie Reeves, were odd associates from Chaplin's days in the English music hall, who had arrived, like him, in America as members of Fred Karno's touring sketch companies.

The most persistent and most successful of the false Charlies, however, was the Russian-born Billy West. West reproduced Chaplin's appearance and mannerisms with such uncanny accuracy that even the most dedicated Chaplin enthusiast might be taken in at first. Only those peculiar subtleties of sentiment that make Chaplin unique are missing.

Harold Lloyd and Stan Laurel, who were to become stars in their own right, went through phases of Chaplin imitation. There was even a lady Chaplin, Minerva Courtney, whose three films have unhappily not survived; and a "Charlie from the Orient", Chai Hong, who made several films in Hollywood. The tramp also figured in several cartoon series.

The oddest Chaplin imitator, however, was certainly the treader Enrique Molina, who appeared in the bull-rings of Portugal, Spain and Latin America under the name of Charlot, wearing the complete Chaplin costume and make-up. The *coup de grace* came with his cane.

While audiences loved him, the aficionados wrote passionate articles decrying Molina for bringing the sport into disrepute, representing, they said, the most serious



KING-BEE FILMS CORPORATION
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Most persistent and successful of the false Charlies: Billy West in an advertisement from a trade magazine of the time

threat to tautomachia in its long history. Molina's only film, *The Suicide of Charlot*, has unfortunately disappeared.

The Bologna Festival also set out to recapture the movie experiences of a rather famous early film fan, Franz Kafka. (Kafka, too, is about to be the subject of a Hollywood impersonation, by Jeremy Irons.) Kafka's diaries and letters show that he was in advance of most European intellectuals in yielding to the fascination of the cinema. As early as 1908 he was reporting his delight in French slapstick comedies with titles like *The Thirsty Policeman* and *The Amorous Soldier*.

His impressions are predictably complex. He admits to laughing with the innocent audiences at the most stupid comedies and crying at the pathos of *The Two Orphans*, and then develops elaborate notions about the nature of the coup d'état.

He is fascinated by film posters, and appears to have studied them at considerable length, divining the story and the quality of the film and the actors from the illustrations found on them. "My distraction, my need of amuse-

ment," is stated in front of these posters.

Bologna found three of the films Kafka enjoyed, to enable us to share his original impressions. A disarming one-reel French farce, *Nick Winter and the Thief of the Mona Lisa*, was seen by Kafka just before his first visit to the Louvre in 1913, and appears to have inspired his reverence in the face of the masterpiece itself.

The White Slave, made in Denmark in 1911, set off a vogue for "sensational" subjects. Months after seeing it, Kafka was still enthralled about a scene in which the innocent heroine, arriving in the city, is abducted at the entrance to the railway station by white slaves. The most curious aspect of seeing, 80 years on, precisely what Kafka saw, is that this scene which made so deep an impression upon him, is a rapid piece of action taking up only a few seconds of the film. It suggests hypersensitive visual perception.

A third impression shared with Kafka was a propaganda documentary about the making of the Jewish homeland, which recalls the Zionist concerns of Kafka's last years.

The Bologna Festival also set out to recall the robust years of Hollywood film-making between the coming of sound and the clamp-down of the Production Code in 1934.

There was a startling energy about the films of the early Thirties: the gangster movies, the exploits of corruption and the brutalities of prisons and chain-gangs, and above all Mae West's disrespectful sex comedies. Films of these years had become more adventurous in theme and daring in approach in an attempt to win back the audiences which had dwindled in the wake of the Depression.

They also, however, attracted a moral backlash, in this case centred on the Catholic Church and the newly formed Legion of Decency. One of the principal activists was Joseph L. Breen, who was for more than a quarter of a century to control film censorship in America. Breen wrote to an ally, Father Wilfred Parsons, that "the nominated guardian of Hollywood morality, Will Hays, believed 'these lousy Jews out here would abide by the Code's provisions but if he did he should be censured (sic) for his lack of proper knowledge of the breed'. Breen's racism gives some hint of the narrow approach of the new censorship.

Ostensibly designed to protect the nation's morals, the ultimate function of the new Production Code was rather to protect the establishment, the government, the church, the family, the police and the purity of the white race.

Overnight the freedom of speech celebrated in films shown in the Bologna programme (from *A Farewell to Arms* to *Call Her Savage* with Clara Bow and *Of Human Bondage* with Bette Davis) was gone.

MAE West's film career virtually ended, and in 1937 Breen rejoiced that there was "no indication anywhere of plans to produce pictures dealing with social or sociological questions". (At the same time the British censor, Lord Tyrrell of Avon, wrote, "We may take pride in observing that there is not a single film showing in London today which deals with any of the burning issues of the day.")

The marvel is that within these censorial constraints, which were to last for almost a quarter of a century, the film-makers somehow contrived to produce great films, and something of a golden age for Hollywood. They even managed, in that once-sensational line from *Gone With the Wind*, to say "Damn".

DAVID ROBINSON

into capitals - hence this show's subtitle, "A MEW-sical Pantomime". On the stage he popped them in at the end of the second line of a couplet, where the actor could add the emphasis, along with a roguish smile to accompany the audience's groan of approval.

So there are villainous puns on "tail" and "claws" and every long word in the dictionary that starts

with cat is dragged painfully into the verse. In the pain is the pleasure. The more laborious the set-up, the happier the sting.

The other Planché speciality is mocking music from grander circles. Burlesque opera was a thriving genre in his day, and the programme for Reginald Woolley's adaptation lists Bach, Donizetti, Rossini and Schubert

among the composers. The numbers are sung to a grand piano in the pit, but if the competition were to be massed fiddles and a mad tuba there is no doubt that the singers would make their voices heard and the words all audible. Body mikes have become the curse of the modern musical, distorting lyrics, wrecking the sense and locating the source of the sound anywhere and nowhere.

Nothing of this happens at the *Players'*. When Geradine Arthur's Fairy Felina, sporting a Gish-length costume with colour contrasting tail, wears honest Ralph (Michael Sadler) to woo the discontented princess, every word of her contralto warble reaches us. Sheila Bernette's perky Puss miraculously points her lyrics without sacrificing the cat-like poise of her mouth.

Woolley's production is simple and direct; he is also credited as designer and his cumulus-cloud willow tree is the very stuff of romantic fairytales.

JEREMY KINGSTON



"Mewsical" pantomime: Sheila Bernette as a perky Puss

NEW RELEASES

ALMOST AN ANGEL (PG): Crocodile Dundee star Paul Hogan as a professional thief who believes he has returned from the dead to do good deeds. Feels a special connection with the symbol of the cross. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

FANTASIA (G): Disney's famous collection of popular cartoon classic characters between the chattering, the clever, and the classically cute. With Mickey Mouse as Sorcerer's Apprentice, music played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE MAHAHARAJA (R): Three-hour version of Peter Brook's stage epic which takes India to the heart of the world. Visually stunning, though the material is highly complex. (Barbican: Barbican (071-636 9772).

AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE (R): Jane Campion's excellent film about the New Zealand novelist Jane Mansfield. (Rankin: 071-636 9772).

BLUE STEEL (R): Tough, blood-spattered police thriller with a feminist slant from director Kathryn Bigelow. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS (R): Robert Swenson and Michael Schiffer's touching story of a woman who finds love in the war-torn city of Vienna. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

DEATH WARRANT (R): Action video king Jean-Claude Van Damme as an undercover cop in prison. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

FLATLINE (R): Peter Schaffer's film about the boundaries between death and life. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

ADAM BEE (R): Strongly acted and directed version of George Bernard Shaw's play. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

BOOKENDS (R): Disappointingly empty tale of two brothers. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

FIVE GUYS NAMED MARIO (R): Mysterious jumpy packed with Louis Jourdan. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

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INTO THE WOODS (R): Sondheim's witty mix of fairytales, grimmer than Grimm in the first half, turns into a musical. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

MAN OF THE MOMENT (R): A comedy about a man who becomes a man of the moment. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP (R): Spool of Gothic melodrama, ranging between the

MADAM BUTTERFLY (R): First night of the English National Opera. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where indicated with the symbol (L) on release across the country.

MEZZANINE (R) (071-636 9772) Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE FRESHMAN (PG): Quirky, uneven spoof of *The Godfather*, with Martin Scorsese as the mobster who takes a New York City student (Matthew Broderick) as a delivery-boy. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

GHOST (R): Jerry Zucker's supernatural thriller. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

GOODFELLAS (R): Martin Scorsese's gangster epic. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

HENRY AND JUNE (R): Anne Rice's historical epic. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE HOT SPOT (R): Raging sexual love and duplicity in a busy Texas town. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE KIDNAP (R): Peter Jackson's comedy. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE LITTLE MERMAID (R): Disney's musical. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

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KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (R) (071-636 9772) Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

METROPOLITAN (R): Whit Stillman's comedy. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE NEVERENDING STORY PART 2 (R): A return visit to the land of Fantasia. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

PRESUMED INNOCENT (R): Alan J. Pakula's historical. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THE SHELTERING SKY (R): A chilling novel (by Paul Bowles) filmed with a warning. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (R): Teenage mutants. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

THREE SISTERS (R): Chekhov updated to an Italian university town in the 1930s. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

TIME OF THE GYPSIES (R): A story of a gypsy family. (Cannon: Baker Street (071-636 9772) Fulham Road (071-263 030) Oxford Street (071-636 030).

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WORD GAMES

Answers from page 18

HERITAGE

(b) Priestly, from the Greek *hieros* sacred, having to do with priestly purposes. "The figure she saw in the looking-glass seemed less recognisably herself. At first she felt a little like a ghost, a ghostly habitant."

PICOTEE

(a) A forist's variety of carnation, originally speckled, now edged with a different colour, from the French *picotée*: "The petals of the picotee have a grand colour, and are edged with a second colour."

ZYTHUM

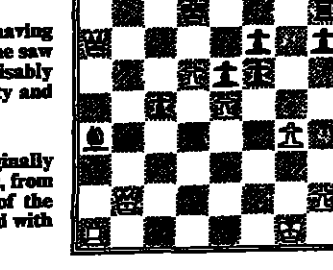
(a) A kind of beer made by the ancient Egyptians, much commended by Diodorus Siculus, from the Greek *zythos*, "Pity." They make a drink from these same fruits, which they call zythum in Egypt, caelia in Spain.

MOGG

(b) To censor, from the name of a former editor of *The Times* who is chairman of the Broadcasting Standards Council. ("Clive James" is a derogatory name for a censor, a contemporary synonym for censored.)

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent



Planché - Mestral, Foreign & Colonial Hastings Premier 1986/87. How would current British champion James Planché have finished Black off in this position? Solution tomorrow.

This year's category 14 Hastings Premier is currently in progress. (Information: 0454 438222)

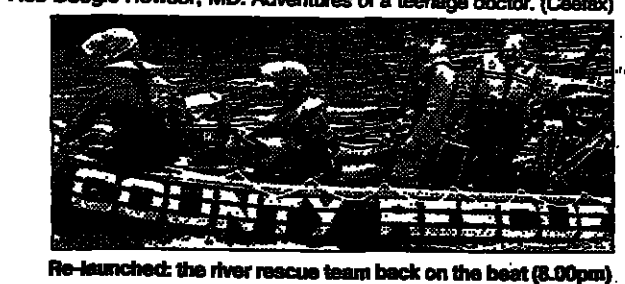
Yesterday's solution: 1... Bc4+! and against any white king move 2... Rxc3 bxc3 Bxb6.

ENTERTAINMENTS

OPERA & BALLET

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL 071 259 0800 (G) 071 259 0801 (G) 071 259 0802 (G) 071 259 0803 (G) 071 259 0804 (G) 071 259 0805 (G) 071 259 0806 (G) 071 259 0807 (G) 071 259 0808 (G) 071 259 0809 (G) 071 259 0810 (G) 071 259 0811 (G) 071 259 0812 (G) 071 259 0813 (G) 071 259 0814 (G) 071 259 0815 (G) 071 259 0816 (G) 071 259 0817 (G) 071 259 0818 (G) 071 259 0819 (G) 071 259 0820 (G) 071 259 0821 (G) 071 259 0822 (G) 071 259 0823 (G) 071 259 0824 (G) 071 259 0825 (G) 071 259 0826 (G) 071 259 0827 (G) 071 259 0828 (G) 071 259 0829 (G) 071 259 0830 (G) 071 259 0831 (G) 071 259 0832 (G) 071 259 0833 (G) 071 259 0834 (G) 071 259 0835 (G) 071 259 0836 (G) 071 259 0837 (G) 071 259 0838 (G) 071 259 0839 (G) 071 259 0840 (G) 071 259 0841 (G) 071 259 0842 (G) 071 259 0843 (G) 071 259 0844 (G) 071 259 0845 (G) 071 259 0846 (G) 071 259 0847 (G) 071 259 0848 (G) 071 259 0849 (G) 071 259 0850 (G) 071 259 0851 (G) 071 259 0852 (G) 071 259 0853 (G) 071 259 0854 (G) 071 259 0855 (G) 071 259 0856 (G) 071 259 0857 (G) 071 259 0858 (G) 071 259 0859 (G) 071 259 0860 (G) 071 259 0861 (G) 071 259 0862 (G) 071 259 0863 (G) 071 259 0864 (G) 071 259 0865 (G) 071 259 0866 (G) 071 259 0867 (G) 071 259 0868 (G) 071 259 0869 (G) 071 259 0870 (G) 071 259 0871 (G) 071 259 0872 (G) 071 259 0873 (G) 071 259 0874 (G) 071 259 0875 (G) 071 259 0876 (G) 071 259 0877 (G) 071 259 0878 (G) 071 259 0879 (G) 071 259 0880 (G) 071 259 0881 (G) 071 259 0882 (G) 071 259 0883 (G) 071 259 0884 (G) 071 259 0885 (G) 071 259 0886 (G) 071 259 0887 (G) 071 259 0888 (G) 071 259 0889 (G) 071 259 0890 (G) 071 259 0891 (G) 071 259 0892 (G) 071 259 0893 (G) 071 259 0894 (G) 071 259 0895 (G) 071 259 0896 (G) 071 259 0897 (G) 071 259 0898 (G) 071 259 0899 (G) 071 259 0900 (G) 071 259 0901 (G) 071 259 0902 (G) 071 259 0903 (G) 071 259 0904 (G) 071 259 0905 (G) 071 259 0906 (G) 071 259 0907 (G) 071 259 0908 (G) 071 259 0909 (G) 071 259 0910 (G) 071 259 0911 (G) 071 259 0912 (G) 071 259 0913 (G) 071 259 0914 (G) 071 259 0915 (G) 071 259 0916 (G) 071 259 0917 (G) 071 259 0918 (G) 071 259 0919 (G) 071 259 0920 (G) 071 259 0921 (G) 071 259 0922 (G) 071 259 0923 (G) 071 259 0924 (G) 071

6.00 Ceefax 6.30 BBC Breakfast News
8.50 The New Year Show (r)
9.00 News, regional news and weather 9.05 Popeye and Son (r) 9.50 Why Don't You...? More entertaining ideas for bored youngsters.
10.00 News, regional news and weather 10.05 Playdays 10.25 Rupert (r)
10.35 Puddles Up. The ladies' heat of the canoeing competition
11.00 News, regional news and weather
11.05 Film: The Vikings (1959). Superior epic in which Norsemen halt Northumbria and the affections of Princess Morga (Janet Leigh). Directed by Richard Fleischer. 12.55 Regional news and weather
1.00 One O'Clock News with Philip Heyton. Weather 1.30 Neighbours. (Ceefax)
1.50 Film: A Shot in the Dark (1984). This second Inspector Clouseau outing is one of the best, with the bumbling French detective called in to prove the innocence of a chamber maid (Elke Sommer) accused of shooting her lover. Directed by Blake Edwards. (Ceefax) 3.25 Tom and Jerry Trips
3.50 Paddington's Birthday Bonanza 4.15 Jackanory. A new series marking Jackanory's 25th birthday 4.30 The New Year Show (r) 4.35 Potsworth and Co. A new cartoon series
5.00 Newsround 5.05 The Watch House. Episode two (r) 5.35 Neighbours (r). (Ceefax) Northern Ireland: Sportswide 5.40 Inside Lister
6.00 Six O'Clock News with Andrew Harvey and Jill Dando. Weather 6.30 Regional news and weather. Northern Ireland: Neighbours 7.00 Wogan in Hollywood with James Cean and Lindsay Wagner 7.35 Doogie Howser, MD. Adventures of a teenage doctor. (Ceefax)



Re-launched: the river rescue team back on the beat (8.00pm)

8.00 Waterfront Beat: Jolly Roger Capers.
 ● CHOICE: *Waterfront Beat* was one of the television disappointments of 1990, particularly as its creator was the innovative Phil Redmond of *Grange Hill* and *Brookside*. The difficulty with police series is finding a new angle to an overworked genre. Redmond's strategy was to concentrate on investigation, certainly a little explored aspect of policing but not one calculated to produce gripping television. Viewers were unlikely to be on the edges of their seats wondering when the new divisional headquarters would be ready. Featuring much the same cast, with the addition of a heart-throb detective played by Mark Morgan, the new series starts more promisingly. Bureaucracy looms large and there is greater pace and urgency. What with motor cruisers being hijacked, a spate of racial attacks and a nasty increase in drug trafficking, the cops should be too busy to worry about their office furniture. (Ceefax)

8.50 New Season On 1
9.00 Nine O'Clock News with Michael Buerk. (Ceefax) Regional news and weather

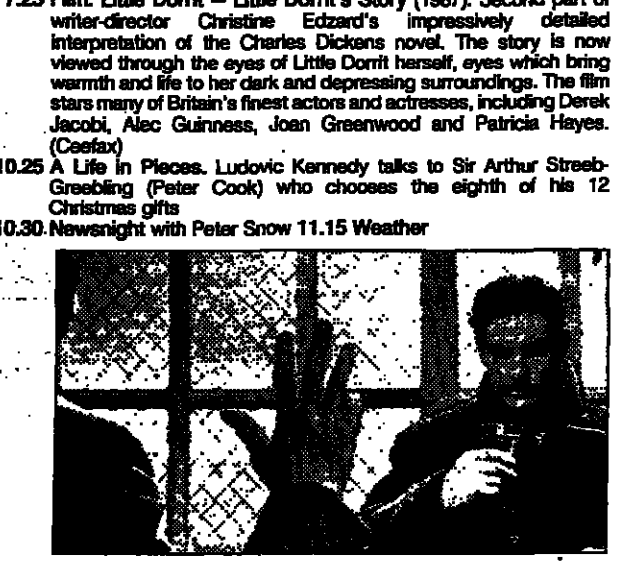
9.30 Q.E.D.: Flying Horses
 ● CHOICE: The first in a new series of Q.E.D. highlights the hazards of transporting thoroughbreds by air. If this is a long way from the original object of the programme of setting out to prove scientific propositions, it makes a diverting half hour. The film is structured around that unfailing narrative device, the journey, in this case the 37-hour marathon which starts at Stansted airport and finishes in Australia. On board is a vet, Desmond Leeson, who knows all about the ailments that afflict horses boxed in for long periods. Lung infections are the biggest risk and the temperature has to be taken every hour to ensure that the animals are neither too hot nor too cold. The flight, which involves stops at Toronto, Hawaii and Auckland, is eventful enough to ensure a steady supply of watchable but not too harrowing footage. (Ceefax)

10.00 Film: The Morning After (1986). Vivica Van Loren (Jane Fonda) is used to having a drink, losing her memory and waking up in strange beds. What she is not used to is waking up in a strange bed with a dead man. A thriller which promises more than it delivers, directed by Sidney Lumet. (Ceefax)

11.40 Film: Night of the Demon (1957, b/w) starring Dana Andrews, Peggy Cummins and Neil Macgregor. Excellent thriller-cum-horror story based on M.R. James's novel *Calling The Runes*, about a dedicated sceptic who is investigating a deadly supernatural cult. Directed by Jacques Tourneur 1.10 Weather

8.00 News
8.15 The Fresh Painter (b/w). Gil Lamb makes a visit to the hypnotist in an attempt to cure his fear of the dentist and the experience turns into a painful one for his father-in-law (r)
8.30 Film: Tarzan and the Leopard Woman (1948, b/w). Johnny Weissmuller stars once again as the jungle hero and finds himself in a confrontation with a murderous tribe of "Leopard Men" and their leader Lala, the high priestess. Also stars Johnny Sheffield and Brenda Joyce. Directed by Kurt Neumann
9.40 Film: Murder Most Foul (1984, b/w). Margaret Rutherford as Agatha Christie's elderly sleuth Miss Marple refuses an otherwise routine whodunit. Serving on a jury, Miss Marple enlists the help of a glibly of the murderer who is charged and, much to the annoyance of her 11 fellow jurors, votes for an acquittal. A re-trial is ordered and Miss Marple sets out to prove his innocence. With Ron Moody and Charles Tingwell. Directed by George Pollock
11.10 How Are the Kids? This short drama reveals the plight of the children of Bogota in Colombia who are forced to live on their wits in order to survive
11.20 The Unanswered Question. Leonard Bernstein continues his Harvard lectures on the nature of music with an explanation and illustration of *The Delights and Dangers of Ambiguity* (r)
1.45 Pies in the Sky. An adventure tale for under-fives (r)
2.00 News and weather followed by See Hear! Magazine programme for deaf people (r) 2.25 Holiday Outings. Bill Buckley reports on a package holiday to Acapulco (r) 2.35 Country File. Features a report on new food safety legislation (r)
3.00 News and weather followed by Songs of Praise from Christ Church, Fulwood, a suburb of Sheffield (r). (Ceefax) 3.35 Master Craftsman. The work of glass engraver Denis Mann who is inspired by his Calthouse surroundings (r) 3.50 News, regional news and weather
4.00 Great Railway Journeys of the World. Miss Kingston takes a trip on the highest railway in the world in the Peruvian Andes (r). (Ceefax)
5.00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. Professor Malcolm Longair, Astronomer Royal of Scotland, explains why some of the most important questions about the birth and death of stars still remain unanswered
6.00 Film: Love Me Tender (1956, b/w). Elvis Presley makes his acting debut in a drama set during the American civil war in which three brothers fall out over love but they bring back from their adventures. Elvis fans may be disappointed that he only sings four songs before he is shot. For other viewers this may be more than enough. Directed by Robert D. Webb
7.25 Film: Little Dorrit (1987). Second part of writer-director John Burt Foster's impressive, detailed adaptation of the Charles Dickens novel. The story is now viewed through the eyes of Little Dorrit herself, eyes which bring warmth and life to her dark and depressing surroundings. The film stars many of Britain's finest actors and actresses, including Derek Jacobi, Alec Guinness, Joan Greenwood and Patricia Hayes. (Ceefax)
10.25 A Life in Pieces. Ludovic Kennedy talks to Sir Arthur Streeb-Groening (Peter Cook) who chooses the eighth of his 12 Christmas gifts
10.30 Newsnight with Peter Snow 11.15 Weather

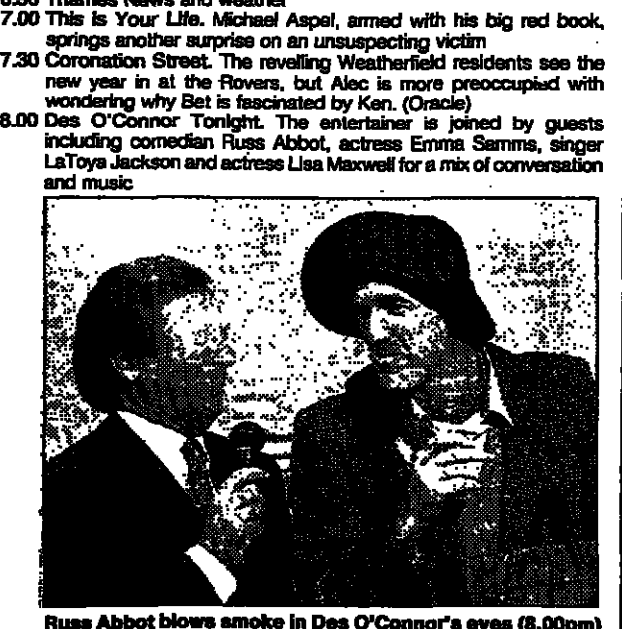
11.20 Film: The Thirty-Nine Steps (1935, b/w). Robert Donat, Madeleine Carroll and Godfrey Tearle star in the first and best screen adaptation of John Buchan's classic adventure story. Having revealed to Richard Hannay that a plot is afoot to take secret information out of the country, a young spy is murdered. Hannay finds himself suspected by Scotland Yard of being a spy himself wanted by the police for murder. He eludes capture until a dramatic chase across the desolate Scottish moorland hand-cuffed to a beautiful blonde. Although the film has little to do with the original novel it is a fast and marvellously inventive thriller containing many famous touches from its director, Alfred Hitchcock. (Ceefax) Ends at 12.50am



Richard Hannay (Robert Donat) and a missing finger (11.20pm)

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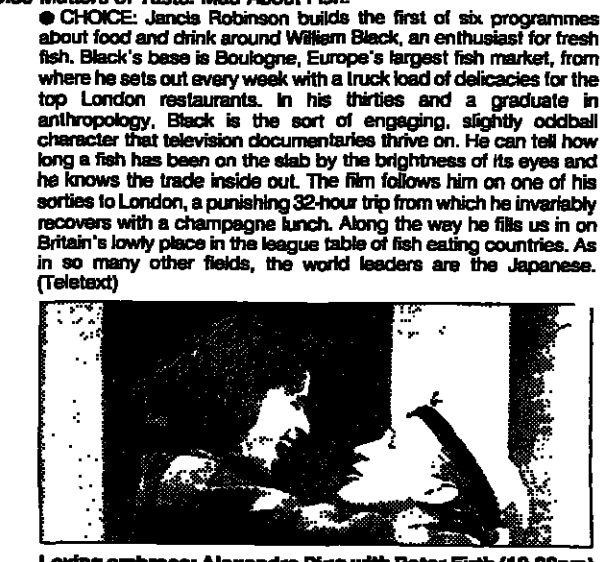
6.00 TV-am begins with News and Good Morning Britain presented by Kathryn Halloway and, from 7.00, by Mike Morris and Lorraine Kelly. In the Doc Spot at 6.20 and 8.35 Dr Hilary Jones recaps on the week's topics 6.50 Wacadoo. Children's entertainment presented by Timmy Mallett
8.25 The New Adventures of He-Man. Cartoon adventures 9.50 Thames News and weather
9.55 Ice Skating. A holiday gala from Richmond Ice Rink featuring the French brother and sister ice dancing stars Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay. Presented by Nick Owen
10.55 Film: The Incredible Journey (1963). Touching Disney adventure about two dogs and a Siamese cat who trek 250 miles across Canada to find their owners. With Enrie Ganest and John Drabine. Directed by Fletcher Markle
12.25 Home And Away. Australian drama series about a couple and their foster children 12.55 Thames News and weather
1.00 News at One with John Suchet. Weather
1.20 Cartoon Time (r)
1.30 Film: Tron (1982). Jeff Bridges stars as a computer games wizard battling against his enemies when he gets drawn inside an actual computer. Inevitably, this science fantasy which combines animation and live action. Directed by Steven Lisberger
3.15 News headlines 3.20 Thames News headlines 3.25 The Young Doctors. Australian hospital soap
3.55 Cartoon Time starring Bugs Bunny (r) 4.00 Hot Dog with Marcus Clarke and Angie Passmore 4.15 Mike & Angelo. Brett is the victim of one of Angelo's crazy inventions. Starring Matt Wright and Tim Whitwell 4.40 Roll's Cartoon Time. Roll Harris takes a look at Erica Russell's animation work for pop videos. Plus an Oscar-winning Disney short and a Sylvester cartoon
5.10 Blockbusters. Quiz show for teenagers presented by Bob Holmes
5.40 News. (Ceefax) Weather
6.00 Home And Away (r)
6.30 The O'Connor Tonic. The entertainer is joined by guests including comedian Russ Abbot, actress Emma Samms, singer LaToya Jackson and actress Lisa Maxwell for a mix of conversation and music
7.00 This is Your Life. Michael Aspel, armed with his big red book, springs another surprise on an unsuspecting victim
7.30 Coronation Street. The revealing Weatherfield residents see the new year in at the Rovers, but Alec is more preoccupied with wondering why Bert is fascinated by Ken. (Ceefax)
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9.00 Film: Ghostbusters (1984). A massively budgeted, special effect laden disappointment, which nevertheless became an international hit. A trio of unemployed, academic parapsychologists - Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis - decide to go into business ridding people of troublesome spooks. They start in Sigourney Weaver's kitchen and proceed to a posh hotel. Directed by Ivan Reitman. (Ceefax) Continues after the news
10.00 News. (Ceefax) Weather 10.20 Thames News and weather
10.30 Film: Ghostbusters continued
11.30 Film: The Last Days of Patton (1986). Long-winded but completely made-for-television sequel to the military Patton, with George C. Scott repeating his Oscar-winning role as the controversial general. The film covers his life after the second world war up to the freak accident which leads to his death. With Eva Marie Saint. Directed by Delbert Mann. Followed by News headlines
2.15am Film: Young Doctors in Love (1982). Hospital horseplay in desperate need of surgery, with Michael McKean, Sean Young and Henry Dean Stanton. Directed by Gerry Marshall
4.00 Burning Rubber. Motorcycling action
5.00 ITN Morning News. Ends at 6.00



Russ Abbot blows smoke in Des O'Connor's eyes (8.00pm)

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6.00 The Art of Landscape. Soothing music set against a background of beautiful natural scenery
6.20 Business Daily
6.30 The Channel Four Daily
9.25 Sesame Street 10.25 Batman and Robin (b/w). Episode nine
10.45 The Adventures of Tintin. 11.00 Things To Come (r)
11.30 Tony Jacklin's Pro-Celebrity Golf Challenge. The Sportsman vs the Entertainers from Le Touquet in France. Chris de Burgh is today's partner for the Entertainers' captain, Ronan Rafferty, and Ted Dexter joins Sam Torrance for the Sportsman
12.30 Business Daily
1.00 Indoor Climbing Grand Prix. An artificial rock face inside the Queen's Hall in Leeds provides the challenge for some of the world's finest climbers
2.00 Film: Down Argentine Way (1940). A season of Betty Grable films opens with this pleasant romantic musical which also marked the Hollywood debut of Carmen Miranda. Directed by Irving Cummings
3.40 The Three Stooges in Pardon My Scotch (1935, b/w). Directed by Del Lord
4.00 Great British Isles. Leslie Thomas explains his passion for islands and for the Solity Isles in particular (r)
4.30 Countdown
5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. Members of the audience are asked to describe the man or woman of their dreams so they can be matched to their perfect partner by computer 5.50 Mr Megaw
6.00 The Wonder Years. American sitcom about growing up in the Sixties, of special appeal to the thirtysomethings (r)
6.30 Tonight with Jonathan Ross. Among tonight's guests is former Carry On star Jim Dale
7.00 Channel 4 News. (Teletext) 7.50 Comment followed by Weather
8.00 Brookside. Soap set in a Liverpool close. (Teletext)
8.30 The Television Village. Last year the villagers of Waddington in Lancashire were given the chance to watch 30 television channels plus their own "village" television. Their experience of television in the house produced unexpected results, not least that the most popular channel was the local network
9.30 Matters of Taste: Mad About Fish
 ● CHOICE: Jancis Robinson builds the first of six programmes about food and drink around William Black, an enthusiast for fresh fish. Black's base is Boulogne, Europe's largest fish market, from where he sets out every week with a truck load of delicacies for the top London restaurants. In his thirties and a graduate in anthropology, Black is the sort of engaging, slightly oddball character that television documentaries thrive on. He can tell how long a fish has been on the slab by the brightness of its eyes and he knows the trade inside out. The film follows him on one of his sorties to London, a punishing 32-hour trip from which he invariably returns with a champagne lunch. Along the way he tells us of Britain's lowly place in the league table of fish eating countries. As in so many other fields, the world leaders are the Japanese. (Teletext)



Loving embrace: Alexandra Pigg with Peter Firth (10.00pm)

10.00 Film: Letter to Brezhnev (1985).
 ● CHOICE: This story of a couple of Merseyside girls hooking a pair of visiting Russian sailors gave the British cinema one of its freshest offerings of the Eighties. It is a film of and for its times, capturing with a shrewd eye a working-class culture which provides little choice between boring work and no work at all and offers its heroines the chance of an ironic escape to the "freedom" of the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union. The girls, wonderfully played by Alexandra Pigg and Margi Clarke, are extrovert and street-wise and looking for fun. The sailors (Peter Firth and Alfred Molina) are willing accomplices. Letter to Brezhnev was written by Frank Clarke, brother of Margi, and directed by Chris Bernard. Both men had written for Channel 4's soap, Brookside. Pigg was an early Brookside star. The film was made as a pittance, with Firth not only acting for nothing but putting up some of the money.
11.45 Sid Caesar's Show of Shows (b/w). Vintage music and comedy
12.15am Jazz on a Winter's Night. A new season of jazz documentaries begins with Wynton Marsalis conducting master classes at Harvard University, at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington DC and a concert at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. Ends at 1.20

ANGLIA
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Anglia News
BORDER
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Border News
CENTRAL
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Central News
CHANNEL
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Channel News
GRAMPIAN
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Grampian News
GRANADA
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Granada News
HTV WEST
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 HTV West News

HTV WALES
 As London except 6.00pm-6.30 Wales at Six
SCOTTISH
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Scottish News
TSW
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 TSW News
TVE
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 TVE News
TYNE TEES
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Tyne Tees News
ULSTER
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Ulster News
YORKSHIRE
 As London except 6.25pm-7.00 Yorkshire News

SKY ONE
 ● Via the Astra satellite.
 8.10 Jack Bauer 8.30 Home & Away 10.00 The Young Doctors 11.00 The Young Doctors 12.30 The Young Doctors 1.00 The Young Doctors 2.15 Love & Hate 3.15 The Young Doctors 4.15 The Young Doctors 5.15 The Young Doctors 6.15 The Young Doctors 7.15 The Young Doctors 8.15 The Young Doctors 9.15 The Young Doctors 10.15 The Young Doctors 11.15 The Young Doctors 12.15 The Young Doctors 1.15 The Young Doctors 2.15 The Young Doctors 3.15 The Young Doctors 4.15 The Young Doctors 5.15 The Young Doctors 6.15 The Young Doctors 7.15 The Young Doctors 8.15 The Young Doctors 9.15 The Young Doctors 10.15 The Young Doctors 11.15 The Young Doctors 12.15 The Young Doctors 1.15 The Young Doctors 2.15 The Young Doctors 3.15 The Young Doctors 4.15 The Young Doctors 5.15 The Young Doctors 6.15 The Young Doctors 7.15 The Young Doctors 8.15 The Young Doctors 9.15 The Young Doctors 10.15 The Young Doctors 11.15 The Young Doctors 12.15 The Young Doctors 1.15 The Young Doctors 2.15 The Young Doctors 3.15 The Young 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Craig Lord previews the world swimming championships which begin in Perth tomorrow

Germany faces up to the future

Faster Moorhouse has elusive title within his grasp

EVERY German representative attending the sixth world championships in Perth, Australia, including coaches and officials, has signed a contract stating they have not taken drugs.

In the words of Michael Gross, the defending 200 metres butterfly champion, whose arm span of more than two metres earned him the nickname "The Albatross", Germany is "looking towards a bright future".

That will not be easy. Even if Germany is looking forward, the rest of the world will inevitably wish to reflect on the past.

In the 13 years since the first world championships were held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1973, East German women won 44 gold medals, 32 silver and 15 bronze in 72 races. Such supremacy cannot be ignored. It is not sufficient for Gross on the eve of his retirement — this will be his last competition — and his team-mates to say "that was the past" and "revelations of drug use in St. Gallen are boring".

Not boring for the scores of women who have suspected their failure owed more to unfair competition through alleged drug abuse than their lack of talent and hard work. For that reason, the rest of the swimming world has greeted the new Germany with open arms. Only the pointing of fingers at China by Canada has marred hopes of a new beginning.

Whether or not suspicions of "East German methods" being applied in China are true remains to be seen. What is sure is that the nine Chinese women are a force to be reckoned with, the United States should flourish, and Australia will be a constant threat.

In the men's championship, the United States are favourites in nine out of 16 races. But a Briton here, a German there, Anthony Nesty, from Surinam, and the distance freestylers, Glen Housman and Kieren Perkins, of Australia, should make American might — just as others did four years ago in Madrid, when only four gold medals went back across the Atlantic.



Power surge: Evans, of the United States, scythes through the pool in Perth while training for the 200m, 400m and 800m freestyle events

There is a feeling at Perth's Superdome, however, that the United States has done its home-work well.

The women's 400 metres individual medley epitomises the struggle between the world's big medal winners and unproven, though doubtless, new talent.

Janet Evans, winner of three gold medals at the Seoul Olympic games, has been beaten only twice in four years. One of these defeats was at the hands of her American team-mate, Summer Sanders, the head of the New Kids on the Block — a group of five teenagers billed as the future of American swimming.

They are joined in the medley by

Hayley Lewis — Australia's new Shane Gould, and winner of five gold medals at the Commonwealth Games — and Li Lin, of China. Between the four, they have 14 top six world rankings, and they intend to swim at every opportunity. Saunders has three races; the other three have four.

Blanket coverage, however, can sometimes be disastrous. Former East German swimmers like Manuela Stellmach, having weathered the storms of change at home, are maybe more than ready to find fresh form after an altitude training camp in Mexico.

The 100 metres freestyle remains a shelter from the super-fit multi-

medal winners. Catherine Plewinski, of France, looks the brightest prospect of keeping Yong Zhuang and Xinyi Wang, of China, at bay.

The American "splash for cash" double act — sprint races for television and large prize-money in the United States — line up in the 50 and 100 metres freestyle. Matt Biondi, winner of five gold medals in Seoul, will contend with Tom Jager, the world record-holder at 50m, before seeking revenge on Anthony Nesty, the first Olympic champion from Surinam, in the 100 metres butterfly.

One of the best races should take place in the 200 metres breaststroke, which features Mike Barrowman, of the United States, his training partner, Sergio Lopez, of Spain, and Nick Gillingham, of Britain. Gillingham has nothing to lose after a year in which Barrowman broke the world record, which both men shared, lowered it further and took Lopez to a time faster than the Midlander's European record of 2min 12.90sec.

The Albanians, meanwhile, defend his 200 metres butterfly title for the second time. Victory would find a place for him in history as the first man to retain a world title twice. Perhaps then, Gross would not be so keen to ignore the past.

ADRIAN Moorhouse is swimming faster and appears more relaxed in the run-up to competing for the one big title to have eluded him than at any time during his ten years as an international. Declining to make predictions, the Olympic champion at 100 metres breaststroke describes himself as "ruthless".

The Yorkshireman is clocking 50-metre laps half a second faster than at the equivalent time before each of his three world record efforts. "My taper has gone well. I'm on my way down in breakneck speed, sleeping and putting my feet up most of the time," he said. "The work has been done. I feel pretty good about it."

Nor is Moorhouse worried about carrying the burden of being captain and being the first to compete. Team morale is at its highest for a long time. A Moorhouse victory could send Britain on a medal hunting expedition. Whereas his defeat might once have seen spirits slump, Moorhouse says that is no longer the case.

"I've always had to swim first and it can be a burden," he said. "But most of the team here are independent, experienced and adult enough not to rely on me for their success."

Madeleine Campbell (née Scarborough), the World Cup butterfly champion, from Portsmouth Northsea, is of one mind with Moorhouse and the rest of the team. Speculation about drug abuse by the Chinese and the decline of women from Eastern Germany are trivial distractions. "These are just excuses. My

aim is to do the best I can. Apart from the two Chinese girls, there are nine of us within a second of the 100 [metres butterfly]. What counts for me is a best time, a place in the final, then a medal and ultimately to win."

A good morning heat time could also send Karen Pickering, of Ipswich, on a slipstream to the medal rostrum in the 200 metres freestyle on Tuesday. Pickering's confidence is at a high, boosted by the presence of her coach, Dave Champion, and an analog testing machine, which monitors her physical condition.

Pickering, at 2min 01.57sec, is a second away from the top three in the world. Her aims are clear: British records at the 100 and 200 metres. The latter, 1min 59.74sec by June Croft, is perhaps needed for a medal.

The British record should fall in the women's medley relay. At their best, Campbell, Pickering, Lorraine Coombs and Sharon Page could challenge for minor places behind a strong American team.

Meanwhile, Moorhouse lines up his favourite in the 100 metres breaststroke, an event which he has not lost since touching first at the world championships four years ago in Madrid.

On that occasion his greatest enemy was his dolphin kick out of the turn, which brought disqualification. This time, the American, Eric Wunderlich (1min 01.89sec), and James Parrack (1min 02.09sec), his team-mate and lodger, should provide the strongest challenge.

FORM GUIDE TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND SIX OVERSEAS SWIMMERS TO WATCH

The guide shows the world record (WR), the United Kingdom record (UKR), the winner at the 1986 world championships, and the best six performances in 1990 by swimmers competing in Perth

Men

50m freestyle

WR: T Jager (US), 21.81sec, Nashville, 1990.

UKR: M Foster, 23.13, Strasbourg, 1987.

1986 champion: Jager

21.81 T Jager (US)

21.55 M Biondi (US)

21.48 M Ruckert (GER)

21.27 T Jager (US)

21.25 T Jager (US)

21.21 T Jager (US)

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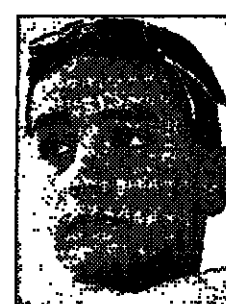
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SUMMER SANDERS (US, aged 18)

Only woman to beat Janet Evans for three years, defeating her team-mate in the 400 metres individual medley at Goodwill Games. Tipped to do so again here; had fastest times in world last year in that event (4:39.22) and 200 metres butterfly (2:05.46).



GLEN HOUSMAN (Australia, aged 19)

Came within half a second of Saldor's seven-year-old world record when winning the 1,500 metres freestyle at Commonwealth Games in 1986. His team-mate, Kieren Perkins, is the only other to have broken 15 minutes; the two are clear favourites.



HAYLEY LEWIS (Australia, aged 16)

A year ago became first woman to win five Commonwealth Games gold medals; ranked in top five in four events and is one of the new generation of Australians to come out of a state-funded development programme.



ANDERS HOLMERTZ (Sweden, aged 22)

Superb form throughout 1990; winner of World Cup 500m freestyle and 1,500m freestyle titles; holds fastest time of 1:50.20 in 200 metres freestyle, winning at the International Cup in Rome in 1:47.28. Has yet to set a world record.



MIKE BARROWMAN (US, aged 22)

The one to beat in the 200 metres breaststroke; he set the world record of 2:11.33 at the Goodwill Games last year. Close rivals are his training partner, Sergio Lopez (Spain), and the European champion, Nick Gillingham, from Birmingham.



JANET EVANS (US, aged 19)

Triple Olympic gold medal winner with the tough task of keeping five young team-mates (known as the New Kids on the Block) in line in four individual events. She was fastest in 1990 at both 200 metres and 400 metres freestyle.

100m freestyle

WR: M Biondi (US), 48.42, Austin, 1986.

UKR: P Horva, 1:00.54, Rome, 1986.

1986 champion: Biondi

48.02 M Biondi (US)

48.00 T Werner (Sov)

48.00 S Jordan (US)

48.00 A Beldan (AUS)

48.00 G Lambert (US)

48.00 Y Baskakov (USSR)

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TV catches yet another code

Codes of practice are becoming the scourge of broadcasting. In the past few weeks we have seen the codes on impartiality, religious advertising, sponsorship and programme content, not to mention the rules of advertising breaks. Most run a hundred pages of dos and don'ts, threats and promises, pompous platitudes and finger-wagging advice. No programme maker can possibly waste through it all. No executive can possibly remember it all. Code drafting is becoming a nervous disease of the bureaucrats, a security-blanket in the child-like world of the 1990 Broadcasting Act and arm's-length regulation.

This ragbag of legal imperatives, hopelessly confused with sensible advice, private prejudice and Aunt Aggie's remedy for chilblains, is a direct threat to the mix and range of programmes ordinary television viewers watch and enjoy in their millions.

The code on impartiality has attracted the most fuss, but it has now been joined by a much wider-ranging programme code which, unlike the impartiality code, does propose the direct censorship of programmes.

The new Broadcasting Act confers pretty comprehensive powers, but are they really intended to outlaw tasteless jokes, to prescribe the precise language that is or is not suitable for describing people in wheelchairs, to pronounce as a general edict "when in doubt cut?"

The truly dangerous thing about a code of practice is that it sounds so harmless. Just some sensible guidelines to help broadcasters find their way through the real thickets of tricky decision-making, and to guide them towards best practice as developed over the years.

But alas, it cannot work like that. These codes have come into being because the Independent Television Commission



Liz Forgan
(left) says
once-useful
guidelines
become a
cratic mess

has acquired new statutory duties, and has lost the hands-on powers to see programmes before transmission, to discuss marginal matters with the broadcasters while work is in progress, and finally to take the decision about transmission on its own shoulders as the publisher.

In future, the television companies will be their own publishers, each one responsible and liable for its own programme-making and transmission decisions. A code of practice is not only required by statute, but is also a desirable aid to broadcasters in a new era

But instead of laying down a few clear principles and leaving broadcasters to apply them in detail in the light of the thousand unforceable circumstances of practical programme-making, this code attempts categorical rulings about minute matters, which are recipes for disaster. It seems to combine guidance with instruction in the same document, but with such loose drafting that ambiguity is everywhere.

What were once sensible rules of thumb, useful guidelines which could always be reconsidered by senior staff in consultation with the regulator in particular cases, become rigid rules, set in stone, subject to penalties for breaches and with no mechanism for appeal or amendment.

In the "specific rules which must be followed" category, for instance, comes a prescription so loosely drafted as to risk

obliging broadcasters to publish a warning before almost any programme transmitted: "Clear warnings . . . should always be employed where there is any likelihood of offence to *individual* [my italics] viewers."

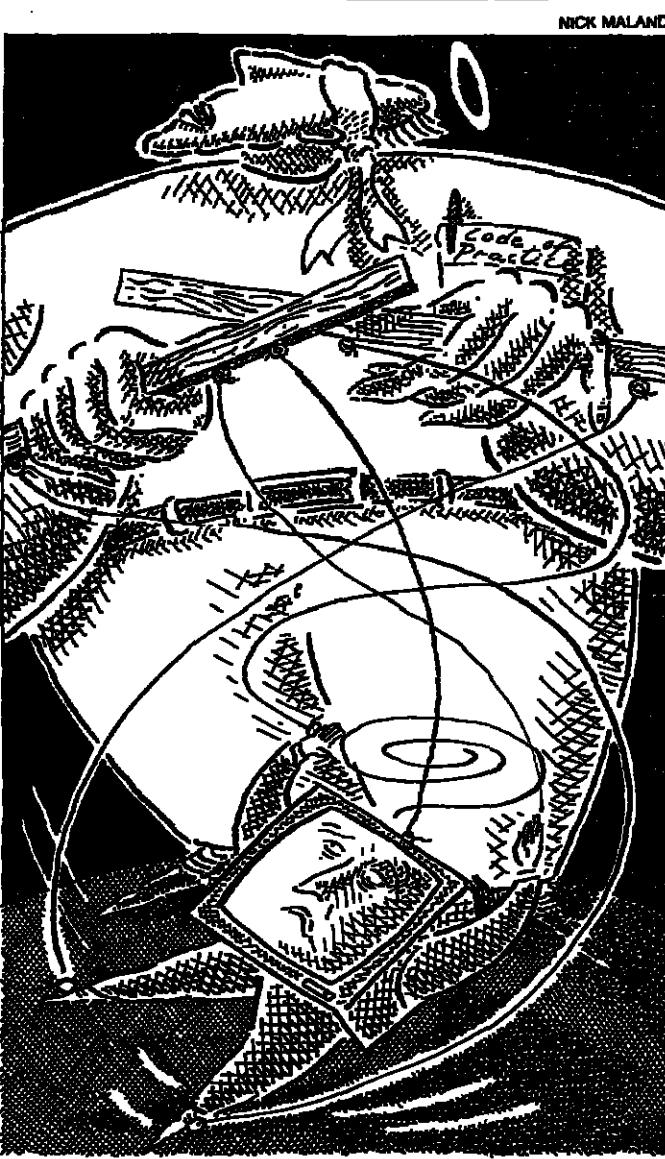
Outside the "specific rules" category, the urge to right all society's wrongs by means of censoring broadcasting is evident in more than one place: "Any unnecessary reference to disability should be avoided, and patronising expressions such as 'crippled with', 'victim', 'handicapped' should be replaced by more neutral forms such as 'he/she is disabled' or 'uses (not confined to) a wheelchair'."

The argument about the use of language in relation to minority or disadvantaged groups in society — which broadcasters clearly need to take into account. But can it be right for a regulator to prescribe particular words as part of a mandatory code of practice? The code does not tackle the other possible areas of this kind of semantic warfare — acceptable words for homosexual people or women or blacks — but once embarked on this road with the disabled, it is clearly open to pressure to do so.

And what of the rule that "characters in drama or light entertainment programmes who appear as driver or front seat passengers must be seen to be wearing seat belts, unless in the particular context it would be

Of course, seat belts are legally required and life-saving devices. But are we to ban all driving scenes not fully in compliance with the Highway Code? No car chases unless driving at 30 miles an hour? Would that be "patently out of character?"

There are 12 "specific rules which must be followed" designed to protect religious sensibilities. On the face of the



NICK MALANE

code as it stands, out would go a sizeable chunk of the most popular comedy archive, ranging from *All Gas and Gaiters* to the still untransmittable (except on BSkyB) *Monty Python's Life of Brian*.

There are bizarre rules about what prizes can and cannot be given in "major reward shows", "intermediate reward shows" and "non-significant reward shows". There are rules about "prizes donated to charities", rules about "scenes of domestic friction", rules about cameras at *demos* and *rules declaring that drug-taking is not a normal feature of British life*. Seven deadly sins are identified, requiring reference to someone called "the most senior pro-

programme executive" on each and every occasion they are contemplated.

This code has been issued in draft for discussion, so perhaps saner counsels will prevail, and it will be scrapped and replaced with half a dozen easily grasped principles of honest broadcasting, possibly even including—as this thicket of Grundyism, misplaced do-goodery, muddled thinking and cowardly censorship totally fails to do—a single injunction to protect free, combative and courageous television. But then, it takes more than a code of practice to

than a code of practice to produce that.

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● Liz Forgan is the director of programmes at Channel 4.

The new guardian

George Russell, a mild-mannered, Geordie businessman, has had the appearance of an outsider in the flamboyant world of television ever since his days as chairman of ITN. But whatever he lacks in charisma, the chief executive of the Marley group makes up for in power. As the chairman of the new Independent Television Commission (ITC), launched yesterday, he controls what we will watch on commercial television into the next century.

Appointed head, in 1988, of the ITC's forerunner, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), he was Margaret Thatcher's choice to usher in a new world of television governed by the free market, but instead he has been largely

responsible for the government's retreat from the stark deregulation proposed in the original broadcasting white paper. In its place he has championed a system of quality through regulation outlined in the 1990 Broadcasting Act.

A little more than a year ago, Mr Russe[ll even threatened to resign from the IBA in protest at plans to award ITV licences to the highest bidders without regard for commercial quality.

To the relief of many broadcasters, his proposal for a "quality threshold", which would mean that bidders for ITV franchises would have to pass before the size of their bids was considered, was adopted by the government. Mr Russell will oversee the largest and most significant contest ever seen


Incumbents and newcomers have until May to ponder detailed ITC programme codes, licence requirements and bidding guidelines before handing in their bids for one or more of the 15 regional, and national breakfast, franchises. From July to December, Mr Russell and his team will judge between

"It's not going to be easy. Anything could happen," Mr Russell told *The Times* in his first interview since last summer. "There are so many imponderables, not least of which is multiple bidding. If everybody bids for everything, considering the quality thresholds and highest bid requirements, as well as ownership restrictions stopping anyone

George Russell,
of ITV's new
authority,
in control

work out the "imponderables", says the final result could vary widely depending on which region the ITC starts with. If, for example, it started with the Thames region and found that Richard Branson's Virgin came out best, Thames Television would lose out. But if the ITC looked at the Midlands region first and Virgin triumphed, then Virgin would be disqualified in the Thames region. Which is why multiple bidders will be asked to rank their preferred regions.

But there is no question of all 16 incumbents losing out. "It would cause such great instability to the system," Mr Russell says. It will be much easier for newcomers to win the smaller franchises, which supply li-



crises, which supply little to the network, he adds. "Only a major company linked to independents already supplying programmes to the BBC, Channel 4 or ITV has any chance of beating a Granada, Thames or IWT."

eye for quality Those who fall below the rigorous quality requirements will face a penalty point system, which will lead to fines. Fines for continual misdemeanors will grow in size. "It will get more and more expensive for those disregarding their obligations on quality, to the point where it would be much cheaper for them to invest more money in quality output. But with a certain number of breaches, the franchise will be removed," he says.

Although the Sky-BSB merger was a "serious breach" of BSB's contract with the IBA, Mr Russell remains bullish about the commission's ability to control licensed operators and points out that the merger has made available BSB's five high-definition channels to adult education programming or minority groups not currently covered.

With a commitment to quality programming on ITV and public service broadcasting on the Marco Polo satellite, Mr Russell seems the ideal man to steer commercial broadcasters through the turbulent waters of competition without allowing standards to drop.

MELINDA WITTSTOCK

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

Companies hold key to prospects for economic recovery

WHEN will the British economy recover? The question is of prime importance to millions of business people setting their budgets for this year. It is of no less importance to politicians, for whom the deadlines imposed by electoral law are drawing inexorably nearer.

The new Chancellor, Norman Lamont, has subtly altered the official prediction by describing 1991 as a "tough" year, when John Major was Chancellor it was only forecast to be "tough".

The economy moved into recession in the summer and most indicators point to the slide continuing for a few months. During the second half of last year, consumer demand flattened while overseas business fell back as the effects of high interest rates worldwide were exacerbated by events in the Gulf. The first signs of the knock-on effects from

falling demand started to show as companies tried to cut their spending and especially their stocks in response to their deteriorating financial positions.

This year will not be comfortable for the world economy, although the precise shape of the cycle will depend on the Gulf confrontation and its impact on oil prices. Just possibly, oil prices could collapse by the summer with world demand slack and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries crushed by American military might.

But it would be unwise to count on such a favourable scenario. A more central view is that the world economy will be sluggish this year and next before picking up in response to lower interest rates and oil prices, economic integration in western Europe and economic reform in eastern Europe in 1993. Con-

'1991 looks likely to be a year of demanning, falling investment, dividend cuts and destocking'

sumer demand in Britain will in theory be boosted this year by the effect on spending power of the rate of price inflation falling much more quickly than pay settlements and by cuts in mortgage rates. But unemployment will be rising and it is difficult to see the consumer regaining sufficient confidence to make large purchases while risk of redundancy is real. So the prospects for this year are likely to hinge on the company sector.

And here the news is not good. Most companies have adjusted their expenditure only slowly to the deteriorating economic circumstances. Dividend payments are still rising, though they now comprise as much as 160 per cent

of inflation-adjusted corporate distributable income. Pay settlements may only now be at a peak. Fixed capital expenditure remains high though stocks have been cut. Company financial positions have deteriorated and it was no surprise that at the Confederation of British Industry conference in November, the bankers were even more eloquent than the industrialists in their espousal of interest cuts. As the old saying goes — if you owe your banker £100, you have a problem; if you owe him £1 million, he has got a problem.

Meanwhile, company boards are flexing their muscles and chief executives with a high pay/high risk incentive structure have

been the first to suffer. To prevent the chief executive with more than 12 months in his job from becoming an endangered species I expect most companies to prune heavily. Inevitably babies will be thrown out with the bathwater.

So 1991 looks likely to be a year of demanning, falling investment, dividend cuts and destocking. When will this end?

The best guess is that the unexpected severity of the recession will help bring interest rates down fairly quickly. Mr Lamont will rightly err on the side of caution — the last thing we need is to let the patient escape in the middle of drying-out to take another swig from the bottle marked

"inflation". I expect evidence that the patient is being cured will emerge: base rates could fall to 11 per cent by mid-1991.

Sterling weakness may limit the scope for interest rate cuts, especially if the Germans decide to pay for the cost of rebuilding the former East Germany by high interest rates rather than raising taxes. But there is still an unusual gap between British and German interest rates and, if the British balance of payments current account deficit and the German surplus both diminish, as is widely expected, there should be some scope to narrow that gap.

Falling interest rates should start to turn the economy round in the second half of this year after a sharp squeeze. But a rapid recovery next year looks neither likely nor desirable.

Is there a danger of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy by warn-

ing of gloom and doom? If anything, the greater danger lies on the other side. One of the reasons why the squeeze on company finances is so severe is that many business people failed to anticipate the downturn and take corrective action early enough. Now their competitive position is worse, their finances are more strained and the economic outlook more depressed than would otherwise have been necessary.

The more realistic the perception of the economic outlook, the quicker action will be taken that will permit economic revival. There are substantial strengths in the British economy which should reassert themselves as inflation abates.

DOUGLAS MCWILLIAMS
Chief Economic Adviser
Confederation of
British Industry

A harsh lesson for eastern Europe

AT THE drole office at Prenzlauer Berg, one of the most deprived districts in the eastern part of Berlin, the queues build up from 8am.

Inside, the unemployed wait with mixed feelings about prospects for the new year.

With hardly any new jobs on the books, the office performs only the duty of registering the unemployed so they can claim benefit.

The days when the people of central and eastern Europe celebrated their new freedom with hopes of an economic revolution, only a year ago, seem distant.

The hoped-for economic revolution has, with the exception of East Germany, not happened. By the end of the year, reality had caught up, and hope and confidence had faded. Central and eastern Europe has learned the lessons of free market economics the hard way.

Economic activity is down by almost 10 per cent on last year in most of eastern Europe. Unemployment in eastern Germany has soared from less than 100,000 in May to 1.3 million in November, while an additional 1.1 million people are on short-term time work.

The unemployment rates in Poland and Czechoslovakia are better, but it is now only a matter of time until they suffer the same fate.

The economic argument so brutally expressed by Alois Schumpeter, the Austrian economist, is that wealth can come only after destruction. "Creative destruction" was Schumpeter's catchphrase. A country, once destroyed, would later be rescued by the entrepreneurs.

Similar radical beliefs are catching on in Czechoslovakia. There, the economic reform process has been slow but this year some drastic measures will be implemented. Price subsidies will disappear. The koruna will become internally convertible.

In Hungary, everything had been going well. Hungary was the first to embrace foreign ownership of its assets, the first to open a stock exchange and the first to launch a privatisation.

The privatisation of Ibusz, the travel company, was severely criticised, however. The issue was underpinned, for the benefit of foreign institutions and a minority of wealthy Hungarians, and the consequence was a marked slowdown in privatisation efforts.

Poland, the first east European country to start political and economic reform, may be one of the last to succeed. The government initially enjoyed support for some of its more controversial reforms, but Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the prime minister, was dumped at the presidential elections and Poland is to embrace a slower pace of reform.

Yugoslavia faces ethnic violence and is unlikely to survive in its existing form. Rumania and Bulgaria will not make much progress towards economic reform for some time.

The coming year holds a number of daunting challenges for eastern Europe. Energy prices will be greatly increased after the Soviet Union decided to reduce cheap oil supplies. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are facing ethnic troubles. The recession haunting the West is unlikely to provide the enthusiasm and investment drive needed to help the east.

If Schumpeter is to be believed, economic death precedes economic life. East Europe's problem is that economic death is a short-term certainty. Life after death is a long-term hope at best.

WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU



Looking forward to international standards: Mike Lickiss, president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants at its Moorgate headquarters

English accountants spearhead moves over harmonisation

AFTER a turbulent year in Britain, Mike Lickiss is looking across the Channel with relish. In two weeks, the European accounting forum will hold its first full meeting as adviser to the European Commission on accounting standards.

For the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the forum of professional bodies, standard setters, stock exchanges and government representatives, will try to show that Britain's accountants have more to offer the rest of Europe than to fear from harmonisation based on continental ideas.

Mr Lickiss, president of the ICA, sees big opportunities for accountants and for British accountancy firms in the Community and in east and central Europe. "We need to address the differences between countries and give greater emphasis to the use of international accounting standards as the framework in the interests of the global economy," he said.

The ICA is the biggest professional accounting body in Europe, in spite of its failure to merge with the Scottish institute and public sector accountants. Those mergers were partly aimed at influencing

Europe, but have led to greater co-operation. Fears that harmonisation will overlay Anglo-Saxon dynamism with continental formality have, he said, been overcome.

Proposals and drafts take so long to develop into formal EC directives that some of those that have recently come into force, or are still being debated, may have been thought up before Britain joined the Community.

"We have 1,800 members in the other 11 member countries. Some of our firms started operating on the Continent before 1939, but there are no German or French firms in this country. Indeed, the Continent may be concerned at our expanding influence."

Big Anglo-Saxon firms, well

represented in partnerships around western Europe, have already set up beyond what used to be the iron curtain. The institute is co-operating with the Polish and Hungarian professions and is having discussions on help for the Soviet Union. In the Community, the ICA will try to promote international standards through the European federation of accountants, which represents 31 accounting bodies from the 12 member states. "That is where the arguments will be thrashed out," he said. Use of international standards is also being promoted through the Community-wide spread of Anglo-Saxon firms.

In theory, 1991 will bring mutual recognition of EC accounting qualifications. A

new form of European company may also be possible. Harmonising accounts of big firms will not happen overnight or by one system formally triumphing over another. Mr Lickiss said: "A long process of evolution and persuasion will be punctuated by European directives, but rationalisation by international businesses will take the lead."

European directives have already influenced big changes in the profession. Next year will see the launch of the strengthened Auditing Practices Committee by the six institutes and associations that make up the consultative committee of accountancy bodies.

The new, renamed, Auditing Practices Board, stemmed

from the need for institutes to be recognised as supervisory bodies for auditors under the 1989 Companies Act. The APB will, however, be hard pressed to stem the flak Mr Lickiss sees hitting accountants in 1991.

"Against the background of recession, there are bound to be many more bankruptcies and the cry will go up 'where were the auditors'. People relate business failure and audit failure but extensive studies in the United States have shown that there is no real connection. Failures are mainly caused by inadequate capital, bad management or poor business decisions."

"There is no such thing as a correct set of accounts for a continuing business with stock, long-term contracts and work-in-progress. Their value can change almost overnight."

"The accounts have to be management's, on which auditors comment. To audit big companies, auditors have to understand the business, assess areas of risk, go through a highly integrated planning exercise and assess the evidence. If we get it wrong, we get sued."

GRAHAM SEARJEANT
Financial Editor

CAPITAL MARKETS

Little cheer ahead for bankers after a year of gloom

IF KUWAIT was today a small, independent, wealthy Gulf emirate and Iraq just another useful Middle East trading partner, 1990 would still not have been rated as a particularly great year in the international capital markets.

As it is, with uncertainty and volatility let loose on the markets, it was a year most participants would prefer to forget. As if global recession was not enough to cope with by itself, the threat of soaring oil prices, economy-draining military costs and widespread destruction in the Middle East resulted in markets more paranoid than nervous. Throw in the Soviet turmoil at the end of the year and you have the picture. As one beleaguered Eurobond director said: "It has been a bleak year for our industry."

In the bond markets, it was a period of dramatic slides in credit quality as the recession bit, with Standard & Poor's recording five rating downgrades to every upgrade. The resulting investors' flight to quality made life very tricky for treasurers of less than top-rated companies and funds.

In the sterling sector, corporate new issue activity ground almost to a halt after August. Only the very highest rated corporates, such as British Gas, proved exceptions. And even if conditions improve this year, the corporate sector, for all its urgent liquidity requirements, may find it too late. The return of the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) will require the resumption of gilt issuance.

If so, "crowding out" of corporate issuers, as in the Seventies, will close the issuing window enjoyed by corporate treasurers in the second half of the Eighties. A number of companies took advantage of the depressed levels of their outstanding Eurobonds to buy part or all in at a profit. One was Storehouse, formerly under the chairmanship of Sir Terence Conran, which rid itself of a corporate millstone in the form of a premium put Euroconvertible issued in 1987. Not so fortunate were Saatchi & Saatchi, even with Maurice Saatchi as chairman, and Next, neither of which could spare the cash to refinance their Euroconvertibles and risk being put out of business by the holders when they demand repayment in 1992.

One sector of the international bond markets did see strong growth. More than any



Conran: rid of millstone

other currency, 1990 was the year of the ecu. With John Major committing the Treasury to an ecu gilt issue, probably in the first half of 1991, the City is laying its claim as the natural home as the fastest developing bond market in Europe. The big breakthrough for the ecu was the development of a large pool of issues of sufficient liquidity to be of interest to international investors. The trend will accelerate this year. Activity in the credit markets was brought almost to a halt by the Kuwait invasion. The full impact was felt some weeks later when the Nikkei index went into near-freefall on rising oil prices. This shattered Japanese banks' capital ratios because unrealised gains on equity holdings are given 45 per cent weightings under Japanese bank regulations. The result was the virtual withdrawal of the Japanese from lending activities abroad as they sought to shore up their balance sheets before the end of the third quarter.

Unfortunately, this coincided with underwriting and syndication of loan facilities for the 12 electricity distributors and national grid. The outcome was failed syndications, repricings and red faces.

Looking ahead, corporate liquidity is likely to be a big factor in the bank credit and bond markets. With a raft of mid-to-late-Eighties vintage multi-option facilities due for refinancing in the next three years, relationships are going to really test. Companies that have done well by their banks will face fewer problems than those that have bargained hunted the best deals in town. Few bankers see much to look forward to this year. As one put it, "perhaps the best that can be said is that we are now in the eye of the storm."

JONATHAN PRYNN

REPORTING THIS WEEK

First National's capital base should maintain dividend

TODAY

Interim: Kleinwort, Benson Gilt Fund (dividend).
Finals: None announced.

TOMORROW

A GLOOMY trading statement is expected from Richard Langdon, the chairman, and Tom Wrigley, the chief executive, of First National Finance Corporation, the consumer finance to property development group.

All of the group's divisions will have felt the effects of the recession and it is feared that trading conditions will get worse before they get better.

The core consumer credit division, where the company has carved out a niche in the secondary mortgage and home-improvement lending market, will see profits plunge as provisions and bad debts increase. Commercial lending should have held up reasonably well, although it may also see some provisions.

Property, which has some home building exposure, is likely to announce a loss of about £1 million for the full year after a difficult second half-year.

Alex Robinson at Smith New Court has



Smiling through: Richard Langdon (left), First National Finance's chairman, and Tom Wrigley, the chief executive

penalised in final pre-tax profits of £42 million, compared with £71.6 million last time. This figure, at the top end of market forecasts that range from about £38 million to £42 million, will probably be too high. Profits will be affected by the size of

provisions and First National tends to employ an over-conservative formula for them.

The company operates a prudent lending policy, keeping bad debts below the industry averages. Miss Robinson expects

the dividend to be held at 13p. The company should be able to maintain the payment thanks to its solid capital base.

Interim: Gibbs Mow.
Finals: First National Finance Corporation, Jupiter European Investment Trust.

FRIDAY

A MANCHESTER clothing distributor and yarn processor, Hollas Group, will see a substantial decline in profits in spite of the currency benefits of being a net importer of garments. Hollas, which supplies a large number of high street chains, such as Littlewoods and BHS, has been affected by the consumer slowdown and weak demand.

The company will, however, benefit from a full contribution from Hawkhead Sportswear, the mail order country clothing retailer. The group's gearing should not present specific problems as it stands at about 29 per cent.

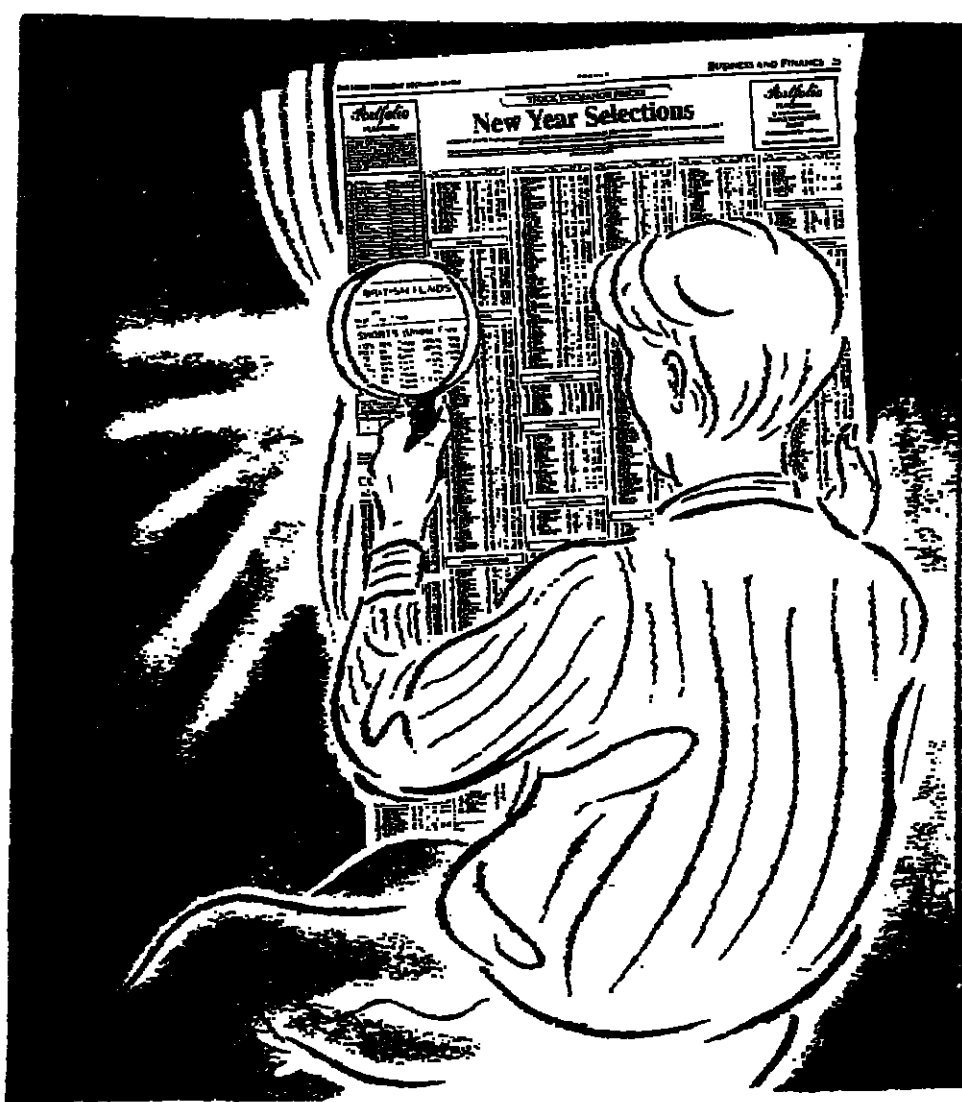
Julia Blake, at Barclays de Zoete Wedd, is looking for first-half pre-tax profits to fall to about £900,000, against £1.46 million last time, with full-year profits expected to slip to about £1.7 million, against £2.63 million.

The company is unlikely to maintain its interim dividend after last summer's warning of a rapid deterioration in what were already difficult trading conditions. BZW said that the dividend is likely to be cut to 0.8p (1.6p).

Interim: Banner Homes Group, Hollas Group.
Finals: None announced.

PHILIP PANGALOS

Eight companies to watch as our top performers in 1991



Investors will need a strong nerve, but they could still find rewards by taking a look at some of last year's underperformers

The New Year list of share tips, too random and ill-matched to be properly called a portfolio, is one of the hardy annuals of this and other newspapers, and is usually accompanied by the observation that January 2 is seldom the right day to buy and late December the best time to sell.

No rational investor would plan his finances on a January to December basis, but what we can hope to do is offer a few investment ideas and point out opportunities which may have been overlooked or overshadowed.

This year, the beginning of the year appears to be a more than usually hopeless time at which to buy anything, except perhaps some durable goods in the spring sales. Within the next two weeks, we could be at war in the Gulf, an event which has untold implications for markets.

If war is avoided, then equity shares have the hurdle of the next company reporting season to get over. The spring will be awful. There will be cut dividends, decimated profits, warnings and warnings. Finance directors will take advantage of the cover of poor trading conditions to clear out the cupboards. Stand by for extraordinary items and exceptional debits.

A strong nerve will be needed to put money into markets in those conditions but, as always, there will be rewards as well as disasters. So, for when conditions feel right (and they do not at present), here are some suggestions.

One area in which to look for 1991's outperformers is in 1990's underperformers. Here we find Queens Moat Houses, the hotels group which has pushed its way on to the Continent with a series of acquisitions. About half the group's profits are now from overseas, but more importantly, more than two-thirds of the group's debt is in Europe, and more than matched by fixed assets in the countries concerned.

Entry into the exchange-rate mechanism of the European Monetary System takes away one area of potential vulnerability, while the slowdown in the British economy is not going to help the group to shine. That said, its management agreements mean that half the British profit is already in the bag.

Looking further afield, the group will be cushioned by its German profits which are seeing the benefit of business generated by unification.

Profits for the current year of about £95 million are likely to be followed by a further increase in 1991, all of which makes the shares at 87p on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 10.5 a firm buy.

Still in the leisure sector, we like First Leisure, where profits in the year to October 1990 are to be announced soon. First Leisure has followed a businesslike rather than a "showbiz" policy, and so has not been caught with the problems of over-gearing and cashflow shortages that have hurt many in the sector.

The management is highly regarded in the City, and London Merchant Securities,

the major shareholder, will not allow its holding to be diluted, keeping a tight market in the shares.

At 180p, First Leisure is not a giveaway in the sector on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 12, but those who believe the leisure industry will be one of the cornerstones of life in the Nineties will be hard put to find a better managed operation.

Companies with strong balance sheets are clearly less risky than highly geared operations in current circumstances, and for that reason we like the look of Carfax Communications. Like Queens Moat, it is also a share that can be found among the down and outs of 1990.

Except for its share price, Carfax is far from down and certainly not out. It has a broad spread of activities in America and Europe, and while 1991 might be a flat

year, by the time we are ready to ring in 1992, prospects are likely to be looking good. At 394p on a price/earnings ratio of 8.5, the shares are worth including on a one-year view. The oil industry is all about risk and, as always, the sector is rich in special situations.

War in the other Gulf may change all this. British-Borneo has interests in about 30 leases in offshore American various stages of development. Exploration costs are being offset against tax incurred from the sale of investments from a portfolio of shares acquired in the Twenties and still on the books at well below present market values.

Dividend income from the portfolio guarantees a steady earnings stream, which underpins the company's ability to pay its own investors a dividend, whether the oil is struck in the Gulf or not. A rights issue

The Gulf of Mexico has

1991 SELECTIONS			
Share	Price	1990	1990
Queens Moat	87p	120p	80p
First Leisure	180p	232p	181p
Carfax Comm	394p	810p	238p
Brit Borneo	610p	740p	610p
Wace Group	205p	350p	184p
AB Foods	421p	425p	372p
Bae	523p	607p	473p
Glaxo	848p	892p	668p

which one day might, just might, come good. One such stock is British-Borneo Petroleum Syndicate, a company as old as the hills but now under new management and full of promise.

The Gulf of Mexico has

in November left the shares depressed at 610p, against a high of 740p for the year, but there are still less than six million shares in issue.

The invasion of Kuwait ditched any chance of a rights issue of convertible preference shares by Wace Group, the pre-press services group, in the summer. When the rights issue went down in its aftermath, so did the share price and it has not stirred since.

Wace is hoping to take advantage of the dismal market conditions to pick up acquisitions on the cheap, but it is already the leading company in its field in Europe. This gives it some insulation from the British economy, although BZW, the company's broker, recently made a minor downgrading in profits expectations to take account of currency factors. Even after that, the shares are selling at an undervalued sub-standard eight times earnings at 205p. Buy with confidence before the rights cloud disperses.

For investors who believe that the 1991 economic environment will be grim, with the UK locked into a recession by high interest rates and ERM membership the choice of equity investment will need to be cautious.

Food is the most defensive sector of the market and Associated British Foods still has net cash of £250 million, after the £880 million purchase of British Sugar in December.

Garry Weston, whose family own 63 per cent of ABF, reckons to be able to extract substantial benefit from British Sugar, claiming that the sugar company was starved of cash by Berisford, its previous owner.

If the market takes off, ABF could look dull, but if it does not, then the promise of the British Sugar benefits feeding through into ABF's core food profits looks attractive.

Defence, cars, property and engineering are all deeply unfashionable stock market sectors at present. Hence the lowly rating for British Aerospace, a share which combines all four. In fact, BAE's list of worries is much longer, taking in uncertainty over the joint European fighter project and worries over a weak dollar, which hits BAE badly.

Despite all of this, BAE will be reporting significant increases in profits this year and next. Analysts have £380 million pencilled in for the current year against £333 million last time and £425 million for next year.

Longer term, there is tremendous potential from improving margins on the vast £11 billion of turnover, improvements at Rover, cost-cutting and ultra-cautious accounting. On a bargain basement p/e ratio of 5.4, BAE shares are excellent value.

Glaxo shares rarely look cheap but the track record and potential from arguably the best portfolio of new products in the development pipeline is unrivalled among major pharmaceutical companies.

Glaxo's profits are also on a rising trend this year and next. Although the rating is well above average at 14.8 times earnings, Glaxo looks a safe haven this year at 848p, certainly compared with many so-called recovery stocks, which will be fortunate to live up to their names.

GILT-EDGED

Look back with envy as institutions view the bigger benefits of cash



Lament: cuts speculation

RECESSION is usually a powerful argument for investing in bonds. In Britain and America, where recession is already a fact of life, bond yields have fallen quite substantially from the Gulf-induced peaks registered in the late summer of last year.

The fall in yields was especially sharp in the gilt-edged market, from a peak of 12 per cent to a low of 10.1 per cent towards the end of the year.

Indeed, 1990 could be said to be the year of the gilt: other key bond markets around the world found it difficult to match the performance of the gilt market. The big question is, though, will 1991 see a repeat performance?

Much has been discounted already and nobody knows for sure how the Gulf problem is going to be resolved. Global bond markets are currently very vulnerable to a sharper rise in oil prices in the event of war in the Gulf and January could easily turn out to be a month when bond yields are forced sharply higher.

While this uncertainty persists, most institutional investors will probably feel inclined to increase their cash holdings.

Aside from the Gulf events, there are additional factors suggesting that gilts might find 1991 a difficult year. Although the economy has moved into recession, Britain's inflation rate and

'1990 could be said to be the year of the gilt — other bond markets found it difficult to match its performance'

trade gap still remain among the worst in Europe.

However, the authorities' ability to reduce interest rates is severely constrained by the weakness of sterling within the exchange-rate mechanism.

Sterling is firmly entrenched at the bottom of the ERM league table even though British interest rates are little different from those supporting the top-ranking Spanish peseta.

Speculation that Norman Lamont would cut interest rates at the earliest opportunity (whereas the Bank of Spain has just raised its base rate to 14.75 per cent, the highest in three years) is behind the pound's weakness. In addition, it is not yet clear that the peak in the present German interest rate cycle has been established, a

lying rate of inflation, which in the labour market is running at a double-digit pace. Experience suggests there will be fierce resistance in the labour market to lower pay settlements even though unemployment is rising and the headline inflation rate is falling.

Such resistance, at a time of weakness in the corporate sector, can only make the unemployment situation worse.

Against this background, the gilt market might start to worry about the effect on the government's standing in the opinion polls.

If sterling weakness frustrates attempts to reduce the electorally-sensitive mortgage rate, then a devaluation of the parity against the mark may be the only way out.

Certainly, a devaluation might provide some relief in the short term for British industry, but experience shows that any real benefits of devaluation are usually soon frittered away in inflation.

Britain's trade deficit is likely to be another factor pressing for devaluation. The deficit for this financial year is expected to be £18 billion (just over 3 per cent of GDP). Little improvement appears forthcoming in 1991.

A contraction of demand for British exports as global recession sets in will help to generate another double-

'As far as sterling is concerned, the risk of a devaluation at some time during 1991 is quite high'

digit deficit that weighs heavily on sterling.

Apart from worries over sterling, the gilt market will be casting a nervous eye on the deterioration of public sector finances.

There may be an increasing suspicion that the Chancellor might be tempted to go for a very generous pre-election Budget which would push the borrowing requirement deeper into the red.

While 1991 (post-Gulf) promises to be a year when government bonds on a global basis find greater favour with investors, gilts look set to take a back seat. There are sufficient problems for investors to cast an envious glance back into 1990.

NEIL MACKINNON
Chief Economist,
Yamaichi

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Bravura performance

FOLK in the City have long suspected it, and now at last there is proof — the British are best. Such, at any rate, is the murmur from *Business Week International*, an American magazine, which has just voted a Londoner as best bond fund manager of 1990. The accolade goes to Gordon Johns, a former director of Lazard Brothers and one-time stockbroker, who is managing director of Kemper Investment Management, the British subsidiary of the Kemper financial services group, based in Chicago. "I am delighted, but it was a team effort," says Johns, aged 42, who read law at Oxford before joining the City in 1969. He set up Kimco — as the British arm is known — two years ago and is helped in his task by Terence Pridmore, a fellow Oxonian who spent time in Kuwait and Japan before he was made head of European bond research at Daiwa in Britain, and Michel Gonnard, a former colleague at Lazard. Even frequent trips to the head office in Chicago are not a burden to Johns — he is an avid fan of the Lyric Opera, one of the best opera companies in America, and keeps a list of performances to hand.

A NEW book for insomniacs called *Count Sheep* has been published in America. The 250-page paperback contains more than 28,000 neatly-

drawn sheep and comes with a cassette recording of a man counting them. The book and cassette sell as a package for £5.25 in American bookshops and department stores. A separate book — with 65,000 sheep but no tape — sells for £3.95.

Great believer

DESPITE a much-publicised round of Christmas redundancies, County NatWest has clearly not lost all its faith in the future. For the firm has appointed a business development director to look for new opportunities in venture capital. Chosen to lead the task is David Cardale, formerly an executive director of County's corporate finance division, who starts today at County NatWest Ventures. And he remains undaunted by the gloomy prospects for venture capital. "I'm a great believer in moving when things are bad rather than waiting for them to get better,"



says Cardale, aged 42, who will be working under David Shaw, managing director of the venture division. In 18 years of corporate finance — all of them with County — Cardale has clocked up his fair share of coups. He campaigned for Rascal Telecom's demerger and helped introduce George Davies to Next. "The Nineties will see many empire builders selling their businesses back to management," he adds optimistically.

Garden blooms

THE Rock Garden, the trendy Covent Garden live-band venue which has postponed plans to float on the USM until later this year, has wasted little time in branching out into other areas. It has just opened the doors of The Gardening Club, a members-only restaurant and dance club next door to its main site. Guests due at a glittering Christmas launch included John East, chief executive of Guidehouse Securities, who helped mastermind a fund-raising event at Roger Myers' Cafe Pelican du Sud in Hays Galleria in November in which eager punters had to bid for their meals. But the star of the evening was Arthur Wickson, Harley Davidson-riding chairman and managing director of the company, who flew in from Ireland for the event. Wickson, who helped set up the Rock Garden in 1975, had spent the day in Dublin with finance director Piers Godwin putting the finishing touches to yet an-

other deal — a replica of the famed Covent Garden site — and due to open soon.

FROM a reader to an agony aunt column in America: "Regarding the young man who said bowling was more fun than sex — please publish the address of his bowling alley."

Down and out

SENIOR executives at Walt Disney, the company which dreamed up Snow White, Bambi and other lovable characters, have had an embarrassing lack of success with their latest creation — a hobo known as Steven the Tramp. For Steven, one of 14 colourful characters featured in Disney's cops and robbers film *Dick Tracy*, has been withdrawn from toyshops all over America after protests from outraged pressure groups for the homeless. The five-inch plastic figure, released in time for the Christmas rush, has been quietly removed from shelves in an attempt to calm frayed nerves. Unlike many of Disney's more endearing toys, Steven does not come across as a natural gift for innocent little boys and girls. For the packaging describes him as "hardened and bitter after a life on the mean streets, a lout who would just as soon take you for life as your wallet and who will use and abuse any young helpless prey he comes across".

JON ASHWORTH

Next stage of power sale generates too many risks for small investor

OVER the next few weeks, the government will market the country's two electricity generators as the next stage in its privatisation programme, and possibly the last before the general election. Some of its advisers are probably already crossing their fingers that the £3 billion float will be less than a runaway success.

The commercials have been ready for weeks but serious doubts are being raised on when and whether they will be shown.

Although John Wakeham, the energy secretary, would probably rather plug himself into a live socket than admit it, the distributors share issue is not much of an advertisement for popular capitalism.

The 12 regional electricity companies are already victims of the float's success, which attracted at least twice the response from the public than had been expected and left them with huge and unwieldy shareholder lists. The shares went to ridiculous premiums and the pitiful levels of allocation have done little to enhance goodwill for the electricity industry.

wholly unsuited to the small investor.

The distributors are rightly regarded as stable utilities with an assured earnings stream. More than 90 per cent of profits come from straight distribution business. The two generators are a far riskier proposition: they are more susceptible to a general economic slowdown, while they must ensure there is sufficient generating capacity to cope with future demand.

In addition, there is the threat of European Community legislation over pollution which could prevent the two with enormous bills for cleaning up their stations. All of this makes the generators a questionable target for the small investor, and the fear is that he may be swept along regardless in the wake of the runaway success of the distributors.

There is a growing body of opinion that the Major government may postpone the generators or even substitute another privatisation to bring in the necessary funds before the forthcoming election while avoiding the political risk.

Nigel Hawkins, electricity analyst at Hoare Govett and a former Conservative party candidate, said: "I certainly don't think the timetable is sacrosanct."

Advisers would have difficulty drafting the prospectus because of the lack of information over what happens to pool prices during a prolonged cold winter, he believes. The pool system is at the heart of the government's attempts to



Wakeham: facing problems

introduce competition into the system. There are further political risks. Existing contractual agreements which tie the generators to British Coal run out in 1993.

Mr Hawkins said: "If you did privatise the generators, once the coal agreement came to an end, it does mean it would be very difficult to put any pressure on them to support the British coal industry. Some of the pits which would be the least competitive are in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire, areas with a large number of marginal constituencies and the heartland of the Union of Democratic Miners."

For the generators, any postponement would be a bitter blow. There are therefore other options which could

ensure the unsophisticated private shareholder is edged aside in favour of the City and the serious investor. Perks will be limited to bonus shares or discounts off the price of future instalments to encourage long-term investment rather than money off electricity bills, seen in retrospect as wildly over-generous. The minimum investment could be raised from £100 to £500 or even £1,000, and the entire payment could be required up front.

Advisers remain adamant that the agreed timetable will be followed, with a pathfinder prospectus at the start of February, impact day in the second half of that month and the offer closing early in March.

Any change of plan would be a significant climb-down, but it would not be unprecedented. In autumn 1989, the decision was taken to strip out the nuclear power stations, seen as unsaleable. That decision cost National Power its chairman, Lord Marshall.

In August, Lord Hanson pulled out of advanced negotiations to buy PowerGen and the government reverted to a public sale. The bizarre turn of events that preceded this, and the apparent rift they opened up on the PowerGen board, contributed to the sudden departure of Lord Marshall's counterpart at PowerGen, Robert Malpas, in November.

The generating industry must therefore be hoping that U-turns, like disasters, do not come in threes.

MARTIN WALLER

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 2 1991

City Editor
John Bell

Chemical industry sees prospects deteriorating sharply

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S chemical industry faces sharply worse prospects this year as the recession bites, according to as yet unpublished forecasts from the industry's leading economist.

The forecasts suggest that output in the chemical industry will be much worse than was thought in estimates prepared as recently as only three months ago.

Though the expected slide in chemicals is not forecast to be as bad as the downturn in the industry in the early Eighties when it suffered the loss of more than a third of all petrochemical capacity, the gloomy estimates are significant for the forthcoming performance of British industry overall.

Chemicals are Britain's third-largest manufacturing industry, and British

manufacturing's leading export earner. A sharp decline in the chemical industry would feed through into both manufacturing output and export performance, prolonging the economic downturn.

New internal forecasts for the industry will be given at a conference next Wednesday on immediate economic prospects for chemicals organised by the Chemical Industries Association, the industry's umbrella body.

Richard Freeman, chief economist at Imperial Chemical Industries, Britain's biggest chemical company, who also chairs the association's principle business outlook committee, will give new figures to the conference which will show that British chemicals output will fall this year by about 1.5 per cent.

This internal estimate, reached at a meeting of chemical industry leaders last

month, is considerably worse than the CIA's last set of economic forecasts.

These unpublished estimates indicate an already severe downturn of the industry. Output at the half-year stage last year was about 1.1 per cent up, but is forecast overall to decline by about 1 per cent for the whole year.

The association's report on these forecasts says: "In 1991, we could be fortunate to see any significant recovery and trading conditions will remain exceedingly tough with profits squeezed and investments reviewed."

The report adds that the British chemicals industry is in a far better competitive position to weather the storm of recession than it was a decade ago and that despite short-term uncertainties such as the Gulf and the immediate difficulties ahead, longer term

prospects, especially in the second half of the Nineties, are encouraging. But leaders of the association privately acknowledge that a number of British companies are already talking about further investment reviews as the squeeze on profits tightens.

The position in the Gulf is seen by the British chemical industry as the most difficult uncertainty, and a war would worsen things considerably, since the fall in output to be predicted for this year is based on oil prices of about \$25 a barrel. Economists believe prices could be a lot higher, at least initially, if there is a war.

While the international nature of the chemical industry will help in the downturn, industry leaders are also concerned about the overall level of wage settlements in the British economy. They feel that Britain entered the exchange-rate mechanism at too high a

rate, and with wage increases in Britain running at up to five percentage points above those in Germany, profit margins will be hit further, in turn reducing investment and so the ability of the British chemical industry to compete effectively. Partly because of this, further figures to be presented to the association's conference will show an expected decline of about 1-2 per cent in the industry's labour force, which currently stands at about 320,000.

Decline in output and employment comes against a generally flat picture of overall output in the world chemical industry. British demand is seen as minimal with import growth squeezing domestic sales. Consumer-related and the basic chemical sectors look weakest, although synthetic rubber is stronger than average.

Brokers will not enforce boycott of GA

By LINDSAY COOK

MONEY EDITOR

THE Institute of Insurance Brokers has said it will not breach an interim order by the Restrictive Trade Practices Court outlawing the boycott it planned to take effect from today against General Accident, the insurance company.

The institute has said it is not organising or seeking to promote a spontaneous mass movement by brokers to stop trading with General Accident.

The brokers have been written to individually by the Treasury Solicitor after the ruling by the Restrictive Trade Practices Court on December 21. This ordered the institute to withdraw its recommendation to members to boycott the products of General Accident. Brokers who continue with the boycott will be liable to be committed for contempt of court.

The boycott was called because General Accident provided a motor policy through Ford Motor Co for 80,000 buyers of new cars. The policy guaranteed a full no claims bonus at the end of the five year of cover, whether the driver had earned it or not.

Andrew Paddock, the director general of the institute, gave a warning that brokers would follow their own opinion in looking for the best deals for clients and said they could not be pushed into trading against their better judgment.

He also said that the institute would be making a formal complaint to Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, about the handling by the Office of Fair Trading of its boycott of General Accident. The institute has received hundreds of telephone calls from brokers who object to intervention by the OFT.

Mr Paddock said that Sir Gordon Borrie, the director general of fair trading, should have referred the matter to the secretary of state and allowed the institute and General Accident to resolve the matter itself.

The institute leader is supporting a call by the National Federation of Independent Financial Intermediaries, another trade organisation, for the resignation of Sir Gordon. Mr Paddock said: "We are bound to abide by the court order which in simple terms says 'shut up or we will lock you up'."

He added that there was a danger that intermediaries who were already annoyed with OFT would take the law into their own hands, which would cause material detriment to General Accident.

Interest rates in US likely to fall further

From PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

WIDESPREAD cuts in American interest rates on personal and corporate loans are expected this week after Bank of America's half point drop to 9.5 per cent.

Bank of America, ranked third, is the first of the main banks to lower rates, which analysts expect to fall further. Salvatore Serrano, president of the California Research Corporation in Los Angeles, said: "Everyone has been waiting for the end of the year. I think that you'll see other major banks follow."

The Federal Reserve Board signalled that it wanted banks to cut the cost of borrowing after a sharp jump in the November jobless figures to 5.9 per cent. Its key Federal Funds rate dropped by a quarter of a point to 7.25 per cent almost a month ago. This was the third cut last year and was regarded as the first formal acknowledgement that America was in recession. But banks have been slow to follow the lead of the Fed.

Acute loans problems in property, management buyout (MBO) and developing country debt have hit profits and made banks reluctant to narrow the 2.5 per cent spread between borrowing from the Fed and lending to their best customers.

Citicorp and Chase Manhattan, America's two largest

banks, have both cut their dividends and a combined 10,000 jobs. In a move to help lift the pressure on banks, the Fed eased its reserve requirements last month, releasing between \$11 billion and \$14 billion into the system, for interest-earning loans.

Mr Serrano expects the Fed to continue making credit-easing moves this year, and that rates will drop again. "The half-point drop is just part of what they're going to be doing to keep the recession from heading deeper," he said.

The trend towards lower interest rates will put further pressure on bank earnings. They have already been badly hit by the loss of formerly lucrative income from MBOs and participation in other highly leveraged transactions.

Global leveraged buyout (LBO) volume dropped 77 per cent last year according to Securities Data, the specialist American information house. There were 410 deals with a combined value of \$30.3 billion in 1989, the biggest and most developed LBO market, the fall was 75 per cent to \$21.1 billion (195 deals). Securities Data said the decline was due to banks taking a more conservative stance on lending.

The collapse in LBOs reflected a general slump in corporate finance activity. The \$321 mergers and acquisitions, with a combined value of \$447.6 billion, announced globally represent a 31 per cent fall in value from 1989. Activity in the American market was hit even harder, suffering a 46 per cent plunge to \$203.1 billion.

In Britain, unsuccessful MBOs, such as the £450 million offer for Lowndes Queensway, have left bankers and investors nervous.

Last year, there were four MBOs of listed companies worth a total of £167 million compared with the 12 listed MBOs, totalling £3.39 billion, in 1989, according to KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, the accountancy firm. The value of listed MBOs last year was the lowest since 1986.

The European crossborder mergers and acquisitions market remained buoyant with a 110 per cent rise in deal value from \$29.1 billion to \$61.3 billion. More than 200 joint ventures involving East European partners were announced. British companies remain the most active in crossborder M&A activity with 513 over-seas deals worth \$29.3 billion completed last year. America came second with 487 deals, valued at \$24 billion.

According to Securities Data, the leading M&A banks were Schroders in Britain, Goldman Sachs internationally, and Morgan Stanley for crossborder deals.



That Rolls-Royce touch: Hooper's Paul Ratcliffe is planning to sell cabs as well as hand-built limousines.

A stretch away from limousines for Hooper

By ROSS TIEMAN

INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

PAUL Ratcliffe is more accustomed to selling hand-built cars for heads of state than workaday taxicabs. But the sales manager of Hooper & Co (Coachbuilders) faces new challenges now that his company is aiming to revive Metocab, Britain's only purpose-designed rival to the traditional taxi produced by London Taxi International.

Hooper, a private company based in Kilburn, north London, has bought the assets of Reliant Metocab from KPMG Peat Marwick, the receivers of Reliant Group. Hooper plans to restart production at Reliant's factory in Tamworth, Staffordshire. Hooper says many of the 130 Metocab workers made redundant after Reliant went into receivership on October 25 will be hired.

As a Rolls-Royce and Bentley authorised coachbuilder, Hooper's speciality is luxury limousines. Metocab will be its first venture into production-line manufacture. Almost 3,000 Metocab cars operate in Britain and Australia. Mr Ratcliffe plans to sell them in continental Europe as well.

AT&T seeks backing of NCR shareholders

From OUR CORRESPONDENT IN NEW YORK

AT&T, the American telecommunications giant, introduced another prong in its \$6 billion hostile attack on NCR, the computer maker.

NCR's shareholders will today open a letter from America's No. 1 long distance telephone company urging them to support its call for a special meeting to oust NCR directors.

AT&T needs the support of around 17 million shares to call the meeting and the backing of close to \$7 million shares to replace the board. Analysts estimated that in-

stitutional funds own nearly 48 million shares, and predict AT&T should comfortably gain sufficient votes to call its meeting.

The telecommunications giant has made three offers for NCR, one at \$85 a share and two at \$90 a share, the first to be paid for with its own shares and the latest in cash.

Shares of NCR, whose board has strengthened its takeover defences with a poison pill designed to make hostile bids prohibitively expensive, closed up 75 cents on New Year's eve at \$90.75 after gaining more than \$3 last Friday. AT&T rose 12.5 cents to \$30.125.

Robert Allen, AT&T's chairman and chief executive, said in his letter: "We believe that the choices as to whether you should sell your shares in our \$90 offer should be made by you — the owners of NCR."

"In our view the choice should not be made by a board of directors that collectively owns less than two per cent of the shares," he adds.

AT&T says it will name candidates to replace the 13-member NCR board once it has the shareholders' mandate to call a special meeting. Once asked, shareholders would be asked to approve a non-

binding resolution to clear the way for AT&T's bid, or arrange a better deal.

NCR, which employs 1,300 people in Scotland and is expanding its manufacturing capacity around Dunfermline, Fif, declined to comment on the letter.

● Plane talks Trans World Airlines is to resume efforts to break the deadlock over its plans to merge with Pan American Corp. Talks founded on Christmas eve over the financing package that TWA would provide for the troubled Pan Am.

News Corp poised to complete debt plan

From BRIAN BUCHANAN IN SYDNEY

THE News Corporation is poised to complete its US\$8 billion debt restructuring within days.

The lead managers are expected to begin signing the agreements this week, followed by other banks in the 150-member syndicate.

Ken Cowley, managing director of News Ltd, the Australian arm of News Corp, which owns The Times, con-

firmed yesterday that the negotiations with the banks had gone "very well".

He said he was optimistic that the total debt rescheduling would be completed without any hitches.

"I can confirm that they [the lead managers] have indicated they will sign and we are optimistic that others will follow suit," he added.

News Corp is restructuring US\$8 billion of debt, US\$2.95 billion of which was due to mature at the end of June.

The company will pay a fee of 1 per cent of the debt outstanding at the end of three years.

These terms are in addition to the extra one percentage point charged on the company's borrowings as part of the restructuring deal.

All the company's debt stays in place under the restructuring agreement, but a three-year over-ride facility means the obligations are repaid as cashflow and asset sales allow.

There is also a \$US600 million bridge facility for additional working capital. News Corp has committed itself to raising about \$US2 billion through asset sales.

The imminent approval of the debt package comes after News Corp was granted the right to issue preference shares by the Australian Stock Exchange.

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Too many shops selling similar and uninspired goods

Dressing down for high street fashions

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

BRITISH fashion is uninspiring, monotonous and poor in quality, according to a report by Morgan Stanley. The lack of an exciting product on the high street is seen as the fault of the fashion retailers who went astray in the late Eighties.

Fashion retailers servicing a £7 billion market have been among the worst hit businesses in the recession and they face two more tough years, according to the report by the securities house. Much of the retailers' predicament is judged to be their fault. At a time when most of the fashion multiples are about to unveil their spring ranges, the report says there are too many operators selling similar merchandise in much the same sort of shops. Shoppers perceive a lack of quality, choice and variation.

"Fashion retailing is an investment area best avoided and 'recovery' buys are likely to be persistently disappointing," the report says.

Burton is criticised for its space expansion in the Eighties and the similarity between its Top Shop, Doro-

thy Perkins and Principles merchandise. "New tactics and strategies are required to reverse the growing loss of market share. Burton is overstocked and overspread in mass market women's fashions and more radical rationalisation, refurbishment and market repositioning should be considered," the report says.

Etam and Next are seen as more likely to get the mix of merchandising right and Morgan Stanley praises Etam's strong stock turn resulting from its ability to buy in response to market demand, but the report says the shares are overpriced in the short term. Womenswear businesses within Searns are doing well, with Miss Selfridge providing the most individual look at the best price, but Searns is suffering in footwear and menswear.

Marks and Spencer, which has the biggest share of the womenswear market with 17.4 per cent, continues to make headway. The report predicts that it will continue to draw customers disappointed with the lack of quality elsewhere. Within Storehouse, Richards

is considered overpriced, but British Home Stores is improving its products. Chelsea Girl is one of the few fashion multiples that has successfully repositioned itself, as River Island, in a move to attract a slightly older customer. The chain needs to watch its quality, the report adds.

Next and Marks and Spencer are the only buy recommendations, but Morgan Stanley says there is above-average prospects in womenswear retailing for home shopping specialists, the underwear sector and discount retailers.

● A report from Leisure Consultants predicts a standstill for leisure spending this year. The report says that in a time of post-purchase buying the more expensive leisure items, avoid holidays abroad and choose cheaper eating places. These adjustments began last year and will be carried further this year, the report says.

A difficult time for the home computer and camping markets is predicted, with a decline in spending on eating out, books, toys and musical instruments.